

Musa agrees to Khartoum visit

CAIRO (AP) — Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Tuesday he has accepted an invitation to visit Sudan, a step apparently aimed at easing tensions between the two countries and opening talks on the disputed border territory of Halaib. The invitation was extended by his Sudanese counterpart, Ali Osman Muhammad Taha, who assumed the post in a cabinet reshuffle earlier this month. "I accepted the invitation," Mr. Musa was quoted as saying by the state-run Middle East News Agency (MENA), which said the date for his visit has not yet been set. Sudan has been lobbying for Mr. Musa to visit Khartoum since June 1993, when Mr. Musa and Mr. Taha's predecessor, Hussein Abu Salih, met on the edge of the Organisation of African Unity summit in Cairo to discuss Halaib. Mr. Musa had turned down previous invitations, and his remarks to MENA gave no clue why he had accepted the latest. Mr. Musa also told MENA that the two ministers will meet in Cairo next month on the sidelines of the Arab League foreign ministers' meeting, which is scheduled to begin March 22. Relations between the two countries have been strained since

King Juan Carlos fractures wrist

MADRID (AP) — King Juan Carlos fractured his right wrist after slipping on a Spanish sidewalk last weekend and will be on his right arm for several weeks, his office said Monday. The king, 56, was walking with a cane when he fell. He was seen in a wheelchair on Monday. The king's office said the fall occurred Sunday night. The king was walking with a cane when he fell. He was seen in a wheelchair on Monday. The king's office said the fall occurred Sunday night.

Diana's admiral left wife

LONDON (AP) — Prince Diana's chauffeur has been charged with driving her to a party in a small plane. The chauffeur, a 35-year-old man, was charged with driving her to a party in a small plane. The chauffeur, a 35-year-old man, was charged with driving her to a party in a small plane.

Peres due in Egypt on Thursday

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is expected to arrive in Cairo on Thursday for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Peres is expected to arrive in Cairo on Thursday for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Man arrested in 'blast conspiracy'

NEW YORK (R) — A man believed to be involved in the conspiracy to bomb the World Trade Center and other U.S. landmarks was arrested Tuesday due to a sealed indictment, defense attorneys said. The man, 34, was arrested Tuesday due to a sealed indictment, defense attorneys said.

Kuwaiti Islamists score a victory

KUWAIT (R) — Opposition Islamists in Kuwait scored a victory on Tuesday when parliament agreed to vote on a no-confidence motion in the government's leading minister, Education Minister Ahmad Al-Rubei. The motion was introduced by the Islamic Front, a coalition of Islamist groups.

The Swiss hamlet that roared

BERN (AP) — A hamlet in Switzerland, known for its annual fireworks festival, is being considered for UNESCO World Heritage status. The hamlet, known for its annual fireworks festival, is being considered for UNESCO World Heritage status.

Ministry urges release of blasphemy Pakistanis

LONDON (R) — Amnesty International on Tuesday called for the release of two Pakistani Christians sentenced to death on charges of blasphemy. The Christians were sentenced to death on charges of blasphemy.

Jordan Times

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PLO wants wider international involvement in peace process

Executive Committee meets in Cairo; accord reached on observers for self-rule elections

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat opened a crisis meeting of his Executive Committee here Tuesday to seek a radical new format for the stalled autonomy talks with Israel and bring in Washington, Moscow and the European Union. A "global re-evaluation" of the peace talks is needed because the existing format is "outmoded and going nowhere," committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo said. "Regional and international intervention and a change of format for the negotiations are needed if the process is to go forward," he said before the meeting opened late Tuesday in the Egyptian capital. The PLO wants to bring in "regional parties such as Egypt and international ones such as the peace process's sponsors (the United States and Russia), Norway (which hosted talks leading to the autonomy deal) and the European Union," he said. Mr. Arafat chaired the talks which gathered nine of

the 18 members of his organization's top body. Opponents of the peace process were boycotting the session. In talks, also in Cairo, Israel and the PLO agreed Tuesday on international observers for elections to a Palestinian self-rule council. "There is no problem on this question. They raised no proposal which contradicts ours," the chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erakat, told reporters at the end of a first day of talks. His Israeli counterpart Yoel Singer said that the two sides wanted to organize free and fair democratic elections with "sufficient international involvement." "We worked together very seriously and made a lot of progress on many issues and we will continue to work tomorrow," he said. The Palestinians proposed the observers force operate under the control of the United Nations and be made up of the United States, Russia, the European Union, Egypt, Canada, Japan and Norway. The EU could also play the role of coordinator instead of

September 1993, two years after the start of bilateral peace talks, which led to the launch of autonomy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho last May. But elections to a Palestinian self-rule council are seven months behind schedule because Israel has balked at withdrawing its troops from towns on the West Bank in line with the declaration. "The current format of the negotiation and the Israeli insistence on revising each point in the agreements we have already reached show that we are at an impasse," Mr. Abed Rabbo said. "The process must be re-examined in a radical and sweeping way. Negotiations were no longer just facing the 'secondary' problem or the usual obstacles, any negotiations can face," he said. And he accused the Israelis of making proposals which had nothing to do with the existing autonomy accord. Earlier he dismissed as a



'ILLEGALS': A group of 10 illegal aliens captured on Feb. 14 with the help of an additional 62 veteran agents added to cut down a hilltop overlooking Nogales, Arizona. According to the border patrol, 515 illegal aliens were captured.

RJ to start using Israeli air space from March 10

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national carrier, will begin routing its westward flights through Israeli airspace from March 10 for a trial period of two months under an agreement reached with Israel on Tuesday. The use of Israeli airspace at an average altitude of 17,000 feet — as agreed Tuesday — is expected to save an average of 16 minutes of flying time for RJ aircraft flying to and from Western destinations. The airline has about 50 weekly flights to Europe and beyond. The temporary agreement was reached after several months of intense negotiations between the civil aviation authorities of Jordan and Israel, which signed a peace

treaty in October ending a 46-year state of war. The negotiations revolved around an Israeli insistence that RJ flights should not fly higher than 11,000 feet. Israel said flights over this altitude would interfere with Israeli air force training flights, but Jordan demanded "free-ascend-and-free-descent" rights as enshrined in any aviation accord on overflights between two countries. The agreement, which reflected a compromise between the two demands, was announced Tuesday after a meeting of a joint Jordanian-Israeli committee supervising the implementation of the peace treaty at Eilat on the Israeli coast of the Red Sea. It was announced by RJ President and Chief Executive Nader Dahabi. The meeting was chaired by Jordan's Hani Al Mulki

and Israel's Eliakim Rubinstein and attended by Civil Aviation Authority Director-General Ahmad Jweiber and RJ officials, as well as their Israeli counterparts. The Israeli transport minister, Yisrael Kassar, said in a statement to the press in occupied Jerusalem that the agreement was a "step that builds peace." Mr. Dahabi, quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the two sides would meet again after the two-month trial period and seek to arrive at a "comprehensive and permanent agreement on civil aviation." The accord covers only RJ flights. Other airlines will have to negotiate their own agreements with Israel if they want to use the airspace of the Jewish state to fly in and out

Opponents of treaty and repeal of laws thwart House session

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Opposition deputies Tuesday aborted the last meeting of the Lower House of Parliament in its 17th ordinary session in protest against a draft legislation that would repeal three laws that ban all norms of dealing with Israel. The opposition lawmakers kept the House from meeting by boycotting the session and depriving it of quorum. Only 50 deputies showed up inside the Parliament hall, four deputies short of the 54 needed. Lawmakers said the Islamic Action Front and leftist and pan-Arabist deputies kept their plans secret until the last minute; other deputies missed the session for other reasons. Had other lawmakers in favour of peace with Israel known that the opposition deputies were planning the boycott, said one deputy, those among them who were absent would have showed up for the meeting and the opposition effort would have failed. The opposition deputies, who number 23, are the minority in the House and

could not on their own deny the 80-member House meeting the quorum requirement. IAF parliamentary bloc spokesman Hameed Mansour told the Jordan Times that the opposition's boycott of the meeting Tuesday was part of its "anti-normalisation campaign." On the agenda of the aborted meeting was the draft law on "economic boycott and the ban on dealing with the enemy." The draft law would empower the Council of Ministers to decide who the "enemy" is and issue regulations banning dealings with it. The House, which is expected to convene in an extraordinary session in May or June, had approved the Jordan-Israel peace treaty with a 55-23 majority. Minister of Justice Hisham Al-Tal had told the Jordan Times that the government was obliged under the treaty to repeal all laws that contradict with the state of peace with Israel. Despite the opposition's success in aborting yesterday's session, observers said the House would eventually endorse the draft law as the majority of its members support the peace process. "What the opposition deputies did (yesterday) was a symbolic gesture to show their opposition to peace with Israel," said one lawmaker.

peace treaty with Israel "since the objective of legislation that ban dealing with Israel in particular is" obsolete. The prime minister said that since Jordanian laws do not regulate dealings with the "enemy," except for legislation related to Israel, the new draft law will fill this vacuum and give the Council of Ministers the power to define who is "enemy." The House, which is expected to convene in an extraordinary session in May or June, had approved the Jordan-Israel peace treaty with a 55-23 majority. Minister of Justice Hisham Al-Tal had told the Jordan Times that the government was obliged under the treaty to repeal all laws that contradict with the state of peace with Israel. Despite the opposition's success in aborting yesterday's session, observers said the House would eventually endorse the draft law as the majority of its members support the peace process. "What the opposition deputies did (yesterday) was a symbolic gesture to show their opposition to peace with Israel," said one lawmaker.

Arabs say no joint exercises with Israel

LONDON (Agencies) — At least four Arab countries have denied reports that they would take part in a naval exercise with Israel and other Arab states. Israeli defence ministry officials said on Sunday that Saudi Arabia would be among eight Arab states joining Israel in a Canadian-sponsored exercise in the Mediterranean next month. It was described as the first exercise of its kind involving Israel and Arab states. But Saudi officials in London said the report was incorrect. "Saudi Arabia is not taking part in this manoeuvre," Saudi Information Attache Mohammad Sobaihi told Reuters. He said he did not know how Saudi Arabia came to be included in the list of participants, which also included Egypt, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. Israel Radio reported that Jordan and the Palestinians would also take part. Mr. Sobaihi said he did not know whether the other Arab states named were taking part in the exercise. On Tuesday, Egypt, Oman and Algeria denied the Israeli announcement. An Egyptian Defence Ministry spokesman said: "There are no plans to take part in any joint exercises with Israel, whether naval, ground or in the air." An Algerian foreign ministry spokesman, quoted by the country's official news agency APS, "strongly denied the report ... (and) also questioned the motives of those behind such baseless allegations."

Israeli cabinet reshuffle upsets forgotten ministers

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin gave the interior and religious portfolios to two ministers already in his cabinet on Tuesday, angering other ambitious colleagues. Environment Minister Yossi Sarid denied a report on Israel Radio that he had threatened to quit and stormed out of a cabinet meeting when the appointments were announced. But his left-wing Meretz Party, the junior coalition government partner, expressed anger that Mr. Sarid, who wanted the interior ministry, was snubbed. "We don't accept this decision," raged Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein of Meretz. "It's a total lack of consideration for our weight and our contribution."

liament, which is normally a formality. Ran Cohen, Meretz parliamentary party leader, described the reshuffle as a "slap in the face" for Mr. Sarid, who has played a major role in the Palestinian autonomy negotiations. After Meretz members met Mr. Rabin to protest, the prime minister agreed to delay bringing the appointments to parliament until Monday, deputies said. The coveted interior ministry went to Tourism Minister Uzi Baram while Economics Minister Shimon Shetret was also given religious affairs. Both men are members of Mr. Rabin's Labour Party. However, Mr. Sarid was not the only disappointed minister. Half the cabinet have voiced hopes of promotion. Police Minister Moshe Shahal was among several left to grumble in private.

Mr. Rabin had held the interior portfolio since Rabbi Aryeh Deri, leader of the ultra-orthodox Shas Party, quit as interior minister at the end of 1993 when he was indicted for fraud. The trial is still going on. Since then the premier has failed to persuade Shas to return to the coalition. The coalition is currently built on Labour's 44 seats in the 120-member parliament, 12 from Meretz and two from a new breakaway faction called Yisud. That leaves Mr. Rabin two short of a blocking majority of 60 seats. He has to rely on five Arab or communist deputies, which he is loath to do, or the five Shas members, who sometimes vote with the opposition. Mr. Rabin, who is also defence minister, had kept religious affairs when he won

On Tuesday, Egypt, Oman and Algeria denied the Israeli announcement. An Egyptian Defence Ministry spokesman said: "There are no plans to take part in any joint exercises with Israel, whether naval, ground or in the air." An Algerian foreign ministry spokesman, quoted by the country's official news agency APS, "strongly denied the report ... (and) also questioned the motives of those behind such baseless allegations."

British businessman denies charge

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The organiser of a British trade delegation denied here Tuesday that he was busting U.N. sanctions and criticised London for launching an investigation into the Iraqi trip. Edmund Sykes told AFP his role was to "introduce individual people and companies on behalf of the Iraqi-British Interests Group (IBI), a non-profit making organisation, to various members of the Iraqi state and to some individuals in the private sector." Earlier Tuesday the daily Financial Times reported that the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in London was investigating a possible breach of the U.N. sanctions by the group's secretary Sykes and director Stephen Crouch. All the companies in the group were thought to have licences for the trip but not the organisers, the paper said. Under legislation governing relations with Iraq, British citizens are free to travel to Baghdad but must first obtain a communication licence from the DTI if they wish to trade or discuss trade. But Mr. Sykes insisted the British government was "well aware" of the trip to Iraq and that the DTI had issued all members of the group with a "licence to communicate with Iraq" before they left. "The IBI, as such, does not possess this licence for the simple reason that it is not communicating with the Iraqi state or indeed with private companies in Iraq," he said. "In my opinion there is little difference between my position here as a tourist and my position as a tour operator."

Afghan plan delayed; envoy says no giving up

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — U.N. envoy to Afghanistan Mahmud Mesri returned to Islamabad on Tuesday vowing not to give up after his plan for a transfer of power in Kabul from President Burhanuddin Rabbani founded at the eleventh hour. "I would not describe it as a failure," he told reporters at Islamabad airport as he arrived from Kabul for an overnight stay. He said he would go back to Kabul on Wednesday to announce the next phase of his peace process. "We have not given up," he said. "It can only be a failure if the U.N. gives up and we will never do that." U.N. officials in Kabul said Mr. Mesri would brief his colleagues in Islamabad on his talks with Mr. Rabbani and his top commander Ahmad Shah Masoud, as well as with the new Islamic Taliban militia seeking to take charge of Kabul's security. Mr. Mesri had hoped to arrange for Mr. Rabbani to hand over to a representative council of about 30 Afghan political leaders on Monday.

but late objections by Mr. Rabbani and a demand by the Taliban for control of Kabul upset his timetable. "We have some consultations, some details to discuss with some people, then we hope to make an announcement about the next phase of the peace process tomorrow in Kabul," Mr. Mesri said. He might appoint some sort of a commission to come up with ways to resolve the deadlock between Mr. Rabbani and the Taliban, diplomatic sources said. Asked if the failure of his efforts would mean the collapse of the peace process, Mr. Mesri said: "I wouldn't say collapsed, we don't use this word collapsed. But if there is no next state, nothing to say, then it would be a very bad development." He said the U.N. was against involving the Taliban in the proposed interim governing council. "They are a different sort of force than the Afghan parties, a new force. We should talk to them, see what they want, but we don't think they should be represented on the mechanism."

EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN — AMMAN

Pakistan Textile and Cloth Fair 95 organised by the Export Promotion Bureau, will be held at Karachi Sheraton Hotel from March 19-22, 1995. The event will give an insight to the advanced textile industry of Pakistan. The organisers will arrange visits to manufacturers, factories, cultural and guided complimentary sight-seeing tours. Cultural evenings/fashions show and seminars will be special events of the fair. 2 interested parties may kindly contact the Embassy of Pakistan, Amman (Tel.: 622787, 638352, Fax: 611633). Information brochures have also been sent to the Chamber of Commerce/Industry, Amman.

U.N. report criticises Iran over human rights

GENEVA (Agencies) — The United Nations has expressed concern over the human rights situation in Iran, criticising Tehran for subjecting prisoners to torture and warning that public executions were on the rise.

The report by a special U.N. representative, Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, accused Iran's government of inflicting sentences incompatible with international norms, including amputation and flogging. It said there had been an increase in the number of public executions and deaths by stoning.

Mr. Galindo Pohl, who based his report on accounts by witnesses and the press because he has not been allowed into Iran, denounced the killing of three Protestant pastors and called for a halt to the persecution of members of the Bahai faith.

He expressed concern over ill-treatment of prisoners, noting the death in detention of the writer Ali Akbar Saidi-Sirjani last November and reports that Abbas Amir-Enzestam, a former deputy prime minister held in Evin prison, was being mistreated.

Mr. Galindo Pohl cited the case of Helmut Schimkus, a German engineer who has complained of being tortured during his five years in detention in Evin prison on espionage charges. He also cited the disappearance from Esfahan of an Australian citizen, David Andrew Lindner.

His report was moderate in tone, however, and noted that Iran had recognised the universal character of human rights in a statement to a U.N. body last August.

In his report, Mr. Galindo

Pohl said 63 executions were reported in the press last year, many allegedly for violent crimes. The vast majority of executions went undocumented after international criticism of the high number of cases, he said.

He criticised authorities for extending the death penalty to include price speculation and racketeering. The Salvadoran jurist voiced particular concern at the incidence of whippings and amputations and the increase in the number of public hangings and deaths by stoning.

Torture was still widely used to extract confessions, especially in politically sensitive cases, Mr. Galindo Pohl said.

The 29-page report will be considered by the 53-nation U.N. Human Rights Commission later this month in a procedure reserved serious violations.

Mr. Galindo Pohl said there were signs of gross prison overcrowding. One former convict described how prison units for 150 people contained 700 to 1,000, with many forced to sleep in the toilets. Hygiene was appalling and disease was rife, with practically no medical treatment.

The government maintains the prison population is 100,000, half of them sentenced for drug-related crimes.

Mr. Galindo Pohl said the 73-year-old former chief of military police, Azizollah Amir-Rahimi, had been arrested last November after writing an open letter to President Hashemi Rafsanjani to press for more democratic reforms.

Lonely lioness hit by U.N. sanctions

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The beasts in Baghdad zoo have become the latest casualties of the U.N. embargo imposed in August 1990, as staff struggle to find food slaughtering donkeys to keep the endangered animals alive.

Hani, a lion from Zambia was the latest inmate to die after falling sick through lack of food.

Now keeper Salman Daoud fears the once-proud lion's mate Sukkar could be next.

For nearly 25 years he has cared for the animals at the zoo, built on a former military site in Al Zaura, and

opened in 1973. At the time the zoo was for nothing, and building on a second phase was due to start. In 1990 at a cost then of about \$30 million.

But it was never carried out because of the embargo slapped on Iraq in August 1990 when it invaded neighbouring Iraq.

Now food is rationed and medicines are in short supply. Only 42 animals are left in the zoo including tigers, bears, monkeys, lambs, wolves, jackals, camels, horses and several species of birds.

"Damn the blockade and those who ordered it," said

"No writer would be able to describe the endurance of political prisoners in Iran nor the flagrant abuses by the revolutionary tribunals against the dignity and honour of the people, nor the suffering of the Iranian population as a result of systematic oppression," wrote Mr. Amir-Rahimi in his letter.

Mr. Amir-Rahimi's son was taken into custody after appealing against the arrest. Iranian media reported that Mr. Amir-Rahimi was transferred to hospital because of opium addiction and was subsequently receiving psychiatric treatment, said Mr. Galindo Pohl.

In an effort to uphold Iranian cultural and religious traditions, authorities had outlawed clothes with "improper" designs or Roman lettering, and all satellite television equipment.

Persecution against religious minorities like the Bahais continued unabated, said Mr. Galindo Pohl. He indicated that authorities were implicated in last year's murder of three prominent Protestant church leaders and said the case against the official suspect was riddled with inconsistencies.

The jurist said the government should allow the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit prisoners under a 1991 accord. Iranian authorities kicked out the ICRC shortly after the agreement was implemented, apparently fearing that the humanitarian agency had given information on prison conditions to Mr. Galindo Pohl.

Mr. Daoud as he stroked Sugar tenderly, stretching his band through the bars. "We need 60 kilograms of red meat just to feed the lioness, the wolves and the tigers," zoo manager Adel Salman Musa told the AFP Baa weekly.

"Because of the rising cost of meat, we have to kill a donkey daily at a cost of 10,000 dinars," or \$15.5, three times the average salary in Baghdad, he explained.

Staff dose sick animals with human medicines given in greater quantity in the hope they will work, lacking proper animal treatments.



UNUSUAL CALM: Two Afghan children sell area was a hotly contested frontline in the bread locally along the ruins of a former recent battles between factions (AFP photo) shopping boulevard in eastern Kabul. This

Iran, Israel in secret talks on airman — paper

BONN (R) — Iran and Israel have been holding secret talks in Germany for years on the release of a captured airman and are nearing a conclusion, the German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) reported.

In an advance release from Tuesday's edition, the FAZ quoted Bonn security forces saying the talks on the fate of navigator Ron Arad had been going on since 1986, immediately after he was shot down over South Lebanon and captured by militiamen.

According to the paper the sources said the talks had "entered the decisive stage."

Israel Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman Oded Ben-Ami told Reuters: "We have no information on this. I don't know anything about this."

"We are willing to say that we are sparing no effort to bring Ron Arad home but we have no information about new developments."

The newspaper also quoted Iran's Ambassador Hossein Mousavian denying any secret talks had taken place.

Israel has repeatedly demanded news of its missing soldiers, notably Arad, before it agreed to discuss an exchange of about 250 Arab captives held by it or its militia allies, the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

The Pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) militia opposing Israel in the region denies

knowledge of Arad's fate. "Hizbollah has no relation whatsoever with the case of Ron Arad," a Hizbollah spokesman in Beirut said.

Last May Israeli commandos snatched Mustapha Al Dirani, leader of an anti-Israeli guerrilla group allied with Hizbollah from his home in western Lebanon.

Israel said it hoped Sheikh Dirani, head of a guerrilla unit that captured Arad after his plane was shot down, would give them information on his whereabouts.

Israel is also holding Hizbollah cleric Sheikh Abdul Karim Obaid, kidnapped from South Lebanon by Israeli commandos in 1989, and Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, spiritual leader of the Palestinian group Hamas.

The FAZ said Iran was demanding as its price for Arad the release of Sheikh Dirani, Sheikh Obaid and Sheikh Yassin as well as military concessions.

It said this was believed to mean the end of Israeli control over the "security zone" it has declared in South Lebanon, a region used by Hizbollah fighters to launch attacks on Israel.

The newspaper said Iran was also demanding that Israel sign the international nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Israel, on the other hand, was demanding that Iran end its support of Hamas and Hizbollah, the FAZ said.

Emir calls on press to stop staining Kuwait's reputation

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwait's emir on Monday called on the country's press to stop sowing the seeds of social unrest and staining the emirate's reputation abroad.

In an annual address to the nation marking the last 10 days of the Holy Month of Ramadan, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah said: "The attacks and counter attacks we have unfortunately been witnessing are caused by personal reasons and have nothing to do with public interest."

He said such attacks can only benefit Kuwait's enemies who are "hunting for our mistakes." He did not name these enemies.

The emirate boasts the freest press among the six Arab Gulf states.

Government censorship imposed on the press when parliament was dissolved in 1986, was lifted before the 1992 public elections that restored the legislature with an opposition majority.

A war of words over human rights has been taking place among columnists of Al Qabas, the only independent daily, and those of the pro-government papers.

It was started with the deportation of a Palestinian poet who allegedly insulted a Kuwaiti columnist in a poem. Islamic fundamentalists who want Kuwait to implement Islamic law and the Westernised liberals also clash, sometimes bitterly.

"We wish that our press... would purify its shiny picture from these impurities that shake our social ties and stain our image in front of the world," the emir said.

He called on solidarity among Kuwaitis who are still recovering from the effects of the Iraqi occupation that was ended four years ago by a U.S.-led international coalition.

"We have to remember that love cannot be created with a decision... and moral values are not ordered by decree," the emir said.

He told Kuwaitis that their pre-ol forefathers had more "patriotic feelings than those who nowadays are only concerned with taking and possessing."

Kuwaitis, who have been pampered for decades with a cradle-to-grave welfare system might have to pay taxes and fees for services they have been receiving free of charge.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rabin's party blocks Golan referendum law

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The ruling Labour Party on Tuesday banned three of its hardline members from introducing a bill which would call for a 65-per cent majority in a referendum over concessions to Syria on the Golan Heights. The parliamentary group, at the request of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, blocked the proposed bill by a 28-5 vote, sources in parliament said. The three deputies, led by Avidgor Kahalani, planned to submit a bill which would have called for a 65-per cent majority in a referendum on any Golan concession or the support of 70 members in the 120-seat parliament. "If we accepted such a proposal we would have needed the support of a part of the opposition," said Mr. Rabin. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said such a law would have signalled that "we don't want to reach an accord with Syria."

Gad Al Haq says he will not visit Israel

CAIRO (R) — A senior Egyptian Muslim cleric said he would not visit Israel because it was a bad, untrustworthy neighbour, newspapers reported on Tuesday. "If we are asked to be good neighbours then those who ask us must be good neighbours. But Israel is not," said Sheikh Gad Al Haq Al Gad Al Haq, sheikh of Al Azhar, Egypt's prestigious institute of Islamic learning. Another senior Egyptian religious official, Mufti Mohammad Sayyid Tantawi, said in January he was willing to visit Israel because Muslims could not achieve their rights by boycotting the Jewish state. Sheikh Gad Al Haq, whose remarks at a Koran recital competition on Monday were reported by newspapers, said: "If Israel has not been deterred by the crushing defeat it received in the October (1973) war with Egypt then no Muslim, including Sheikh Al Azhar, would want to visit it at all. (No Muslim) would want to fulfill any of (Israel's) requests as long as it continues to ignore contracts and promises and is not a good neighbour."

Syrians elect local councils

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syrians went to the polls Tuesday to elect local administration councils for the country's 14 governorates. According to official statistics, 22,196 candidates were competing for 5,452 council seats. Local councils provide social, educational and cultural services for citizens. They are elected for four-year terms. The election process will continue through Wednesday, supervised by polling committees headed by city mayors.

Russian spy chief visits Turkey

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's counter-intelligence head, Sergei Stepashin, left here Tuesday for a visit to Turkey focusing on Chechnya, and fighting terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime, the news agency Interfax said. Mr. Stepashin, director of the Federal counter-intelligence service FSK, formerly the KGB, was scheduled to meet with his counterparts in Turkey's special services. Interfax said, Turkey's attitude to the Chechnya conflict has been ambiguous. Turkish Interior Minister Nihat Metense, during a visit here in January to look at Russian military hardware, stressed that it was an internal Russian problem. But earlier in January, the Turkish parliament condemned Russian "atrocities" in Chechnya and said the crisis there could spark further instability in the already jittery Caucasus region.

Israel links fishing ban to 'harassment'

BEIRUT (AFP) — Israel has linked a ban on overnight fishing in South Lebanese territorial waters to the alleged harassment of people going in and out of its "security zone" in South Lebanon, officials said on Tuesday. Israel sent a note to the Lebanese army saying the ban will be maintained as long as the army "harassed" travellers entering and leaving the occupied border strip, the official said. Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri rejected the Israeli conditions and denounced the message as a new threat from the Jewish state. "Are they asking us to put an end in the (security) measures taken by the Lebanese army in a bid to send us car-bombs?" Mr. Berri told reporters after the army informed him of the Israeli note. "It is our right to take any measure we consider necessary to maintain peace and order in our country," he said.

Libya asks for Indonesian help

JAKARTA (AFP) — Libya has called on Indonesia, a recently appointed member of the U.N. Security Council, to help seek a review of international sanctions imposed upon Tripoli after the 1988 bombing of a U.S. airliner. Visiting Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Mustafa Al Muntaser told journalists Tuesday that he had asked Indonesia to support a review of the sanctions, saying fresh evidence raised doubts about Libyan involvement in the Lockerbie bombing. He said the Security Council should "review the whole issue versus Libya and all the sanctions should be abolished until a thorough investigation has been carried out to find out the truth."

PNA holds six Abu Nidal members

GAZA (R) — Palestinian police are holding six members of the Abu Nidal group in Gaza on suspicion of "planning to destabilise" the self-rule areas, the Palestinian legal adviser said on Tuesday. "Six people from the Abu Nidal group... are being questioned. This group had many plans against Palestinian security. The definitely were aiming to undermine Palestinian national security," said Khaled Al Kidra, the Palestinian attorney general in Gaza. A Gaza family said three of its members were among the six Palestinians detained last October on suspicion of belonging to the Abu Nidal group. Members of the Abdo family denied that their relatives were activists in any guerrilla group. A senior aide to Yasser Arafat said in a newspaper interview published on Monday that a member of Abu Nidal's Fatah Revolutionary Council was in custody on suspicion of plotting to assassinate Mr. Arafat.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 "Les Raisons d'Avenir"
17:30 Envoyé Spécial "Magazine"
19:00 News in French
19:15 E-M6
19:30 Ramadan in the World
19:45 Charlie Chaplin
20:00 Get to Know Your Body
20:15 Law and Order
21:10 The Dwelling Place
22:00 News in English
22:30 Snowy River
23:15 Feature film: "Prescription for Murder"

PRAYER TIMES

04:51 Fajr
06:00 Sunrise
11:09 Dhuhur
15:01 Asr
17:31 Maghreb
18:48 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 661952
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 311295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures will drop with a chance of thunder showers. Skies will be cloudy and winds southerly active. In Amman, skies will be partly cloudy, winds southerly active and seas rough.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Imanieh 714451
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiyab 758848
Dr. Yousef Abdo 694916
Dr. Mohammad Al Ghoul 790730
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salan pharmacy 636730
Yaacoub pharmacy 649495
Simciani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu (—)
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Fawaz Harzallah 903644
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

MIN/MAX TEMP.

Amman 5/10
Aqaba 10/19
Deserts 4/12

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Jordan Valley 11/18

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 22, Humidity readings: Amman 37 per cent, Aqaba 44 per cent.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 771212
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896540
Public Security Department 630221
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repair 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 660100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381302
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 64428116
Al-Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 64244112
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malles, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmiciani 66417114
Shmiciani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66416416
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77710112
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army, MMarka 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IBDIB:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)272555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
The Al-Nafces Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)33200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:35 Agaba (RJ)
07:30 Jeddah (RJ)
08:35 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:45 Laraca (RJ)
10:50 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
16:35 London (RJ)
16:40 Brussels (RJ)
16:45 Istanbul (RJ)
17:30 Paris (RJ)
18:35 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
18:10 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:10 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:10 Rome (RJ)
23:40 Beirut (RJ)
00:20 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:35 Cairo (MS)
10:30 Sana (Y)
10:30 Jeddah (SV)
14:20 Algiers (AF)
16:15 Karachi (PK)
19:05 Laraca (CY)
20:28 Beirut (ME)
23:05 Athens (OA)
23:05 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 Agaba (RJ)
09:30 Rome (RJ)
10:35 Berlin, London (RJ)
10:50 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:05 Colombo (RJ)
19:35 Beirut (RJ)
19:40 Agaba, Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh (RJ)
20:30 Aden (RJ)
20:30 New Delhi (RJ)
21:25 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:45 Sana (Y)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:45 Beirut (ME)
10:30 Cairo (MS)
11:30 Sana (Y)
11:30 Jeddah (SV)
15:20 Sharjah (AH)
22:30 Muscat, Karachi (PK)
00:20 Laraca (CY)
00:20 Amsterdam (KL)
02:40 Athens (OA)

HIAZ RAILWAY

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:30 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upperflower price in ffs per kg
Apple 700/400
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 130/70
Carrot 180/100
Cauliflower 120/60
Green Beans 120/60
Cucumbers (small) 350/200
Eggplant 170/120
Garlic 1100/200
Grape Fruit 280/200
Green Beans 600/500
Lemon 200/200
Marrow (large) 150/100
Marrow (small) 120/100
Onion (dry) 500/200
Orange 300/200
Pepper (hot) 300/200
Pepper (sweet) 300/200
Potato 200/200
Radish 200/200
Spinach 200/200
String Beans 200/200
Tomato 200/200

Home



Her Royal Highness Princess Tuesday visits districts in Irbid as part of the Ramadan

Princess Basma

IRBID (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Tuesday visited the districts of Taybeh and North Mazar in Irbid Governorate as part of the annual Ramadan charity campaign launched by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF). The Princess met with representatives of various charitable and other local organisations and expressed QAF's determination to help socio-economic development in the rural regions and local communities. Princess Basma, who is

NHF brings 'dynamic ed

AMMAN (J.T.) — After almost two months of preparation the Noot Al Hussein Foundation's Theatre-in-Education Programme (TIE), in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the British Council, Tuesday night brought the efforts of British playwright and director Geoff Gillham and a group of Jordanian actors, directors and playwrights to the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) stage, a Royal Court statement said. Their production, a new TIE play about the historic city of Umm Qais, is entitled "Gadara." Mr. Gillham, who has worked for the last 20 years with theatre-in-education companies in England and Wales, was hosted by the foundation's TIE programme in cooperation with the ministry and the British Council to put together this production, according to the statement. "Gadara," said the statement, adheres to TIE guide-

U.S. embassy to

AMMAN (J.T.) — The American embassy in Amman will hold its third annual computer show Feb. 22, 23 and 24, in the Philadelphia Hotel, an embassy statement said. This year's show will be co-sponsored by Tansat Information Group, Sinam Integrated Systems, Byte-Middle East Magazine, ACESS, Hertz/Shakhshir, Reni-A-Car, Al-Aswad daily newspaper, Aramex, Jordan

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled for the daily Arabic press. Readers the listed time and place with the co

FILMS

★ Film entitled "Dr. Strangelove" at 7:00 p.m.
★ Special programme: "Holiday Heritage Tour" at the American

PLAY

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

SEMINAR

★ Seminar (in Arabic) entitled "The to the International System" with Mr. Laith Shabbat at the Royal C

EXHIBITION

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by S Bayraq Art Gallery, Sports C 688701).
★ Exhibition of handicrafts by Bas Royal Cultural Centre.
★ Photo exhibition at the Friends of "Young America" exhibit (with p Americans of all ages) at the Am Bank Complex Gallery.
★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cul

Mexico alleges U.S. human rights violations

Mexican rights group says prisoners show signs of torture

MEXICO CITY (Agencies) — A government human rights inspector says four of seven people arrested two weeks ago for alleged ties with Indian rebels showed signs of having been tortured.

All seven said they were forced to sign confessions after they were arrested and were not allowed to read what they had allegedly confessed.

The allegations were contained in a 39-page report, released late Monday, on 24 complaints the government's human rights commission received following President Ernesto Zedillo's Feb. 9 crackdown on the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army.

Jorge Madrazo Cuellar, president of the commission, read the report to journalists and officials in Mexico City. He also condemned ranchers and landowners for harassing Roman Catholic Bishop Samuel Ruiz over the weekend in the southern state of Chiapas.

The ranchers and landowners accuse the bishop of complicity with the rebels, who rose up in Chiapas last year to demand better living conditions for Indian peasants and clean elections.

More than 30 people were arrested in the crackdown on the rebels and the government claims it has found rebel safe houses and weapons caches in Chiapas, and two

other states.

Five men and two women were arrested in the Veracruz town of Yanga on Feb. 9. The report said commission investigators and doctors certified that four of the men showed definite signs of torture.

It said other complaints made to the commission are under investigation.

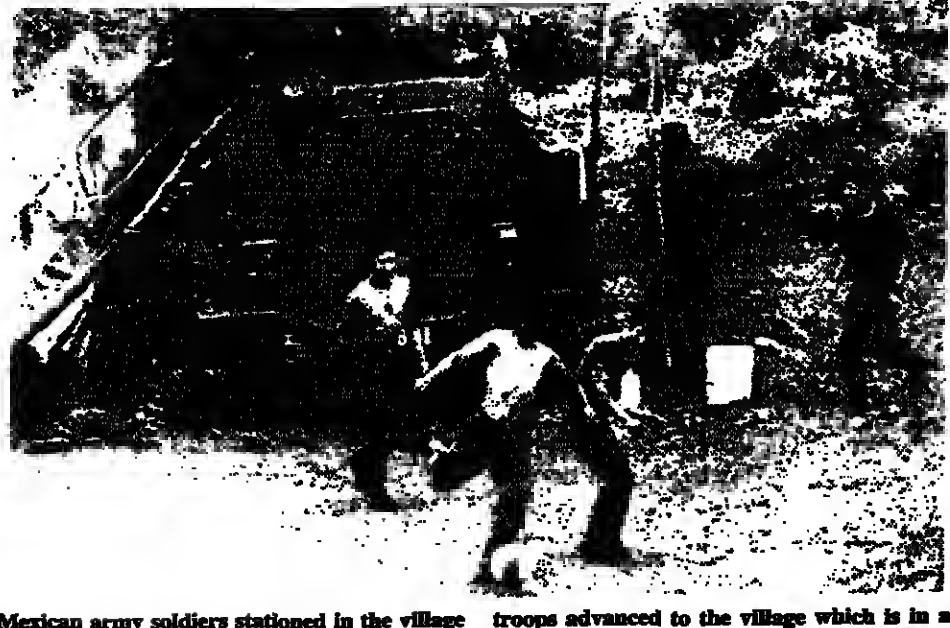
The Zapatista rebellion began Jan. 1, 1994, and at least 145 people died in fighting until a ceasefire was declared 12 days later.

The Mexican army has moved into rebel zones, and the insurgents have fled into the jungle along with thousands of sympathisers from area villages.

Peace efforts in southern Mexico have suffered a setback with both the government and Maya Indian rebels refusing to drop their rival claims over a huge swathe of jungle territory.

The army has seized dozens of towns and villages in a virtually bloodless 11-day drive deep into rebel-held areas and has no intention of giving up its gains, hoping to push rebel leaders into negotiations from a position of weakness.

But the Zapatista National Liberation Army says it will not sit down for talks until the government pulls back its troops and allows thousands of pro-rebel refugees to return to their villages in the



Mexican army soldiers stationed in the village of La Garrucha in the state of Chiapas in Mexico play a friendly game of soccer. The troops advanced to the village which is in an area formerly controlled by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (AFP photo)

U.S. House Republicans set fast pace; but steepest hurdles yet to come

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans have abandoned Congress' leisurely pace as they rush to deliver on their "Contract With America." But nearly halfway to their 100-day deadline, much more than half the job remains undone.

And the stickiest issues are yet to come.

From a balanced budget amendment to tax cuts, from slashing regulations to re-vamping welfare, every item in the contract is poll-tested and highly popular with the public.

Still, lawmakers are discovering as they race from item to item that some proposals need improvement, some are divisive and some could hit a brick wall in the Senate or encounter a presidential veto.

"It's a little bit like a multi-course dinner in which the first couple of courses are bland and acceptable to everybody. As it goes on, the dishes get more exotic and harder to digest," said Rutgers University political scientist Ross Baker.

The contract, a campaign document that hundreds of republican House candidates signed and ran on last fall, pledged votes on 10 legislative packages in the first 100 days of the 104th Congress if Republicans won control of the House of Representatives.

"We've got some tough stuff ahead of us," House majority leader Dick Armey of Texas, said in an interview. But, with an optimism not universally shared, he predicted 80 per cent of the "contract" would pass the House and 50 per cent of it eventually would become law.

Wednesday marks the midpoint of what so far has been a highly productive opening run marked by iron party discipline and virtually no distractions.

Republican setbacks can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Most notably, Republicans tried and failed to revive a missile defence system. They also tried to make it constitutionally impossible to raise income-tax rates without a three-fifths majority vote, but didn't have the votes.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia has called the Republicans' success rate "pretty astonishing."

So far the Republicans have fulfilled opening-day commitments to reform internal house affairs and apply all federal laws to Congress, and the House has passed three complete sections of the campaign-season contract.

A balanced budget amendment to the constitution and line-item veto authority for the president granting him the right to veto specific spending measures in a bill, Senate approval of the budget amendment is uncertain at this point. Even if it passes, 38 state legislatures must then ratify it.

Sihanouk criticises government

BAYON TEMPLE, Cambodia (Agencies) — Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk reiterated Tuesday he has no desire for executive power despite a dislike for the Phnom Penh government led by his son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

"I do not admire very much this current regime, but I accept it," he told a crowd of about 200 people including government officials and Western ambassadors.

Among those who heard his remarks were First Prime Minister Ranariddh who was seated behind his father, U.S. Ambassador Charles Twining and Japanese Ambassador Yukio Imagawa.

King Sihanouk did not elaborate but firmly ruled out any desire to return to mainstream politics.

"I cannot and I will not be willing... to take power," he said. "It would be detrimental to the trend of the present government."

"So, no way for Sihanouk to take power. Even if, according to my Chinese doctor, I'm still strong, I'm not going to play such a game which is more dangerous than the present government."

King Sihanouk's speech was given in the shade of the 12th century Bayon Temple, home to King Sihanouk's forebears who once ruled a mighty empire from their base here.

He said he would not launch a constitutional coup against the current government, appointed to power following U.N.-organised elections in May 1993.

Referring to a letter from Hun Sen expressing concern

about his ambitions, King Sihanouk replied: "I said, Your Excellency, you can be sure I have always been honest. I hate a coup d'etat."

"I was a victim in 1970 of a coup d'etat by Lon Nol and Sihanouk, my cousin. And you know that was the beginning of the misery, of the suffering, of the humiliation of Cambodia."

In his speech Tuesday, King Sihanouk gave no reason for his remarks about government but Sunday, the 72-year-old monarch strongly criticised Phnom Penh for selling out the nation's forests.

He rebuked Cambodia's rulers for allowing massive deforestation which he warned would turn the country into a desert.

Speaking at a ceremony to provide families of Khmer Rouge defectors with emergency food rations, King Sihanouk warned the country's leaders that actions spoke louder than words when it came to protecting Cambodia's forest heritage.

"Before the Lon Nol coup, 73 per cent of our country was covered with forest. Today, according to figures which I think are very optimistic, there is only 43 per cent. I think we have less than 40 per cent," he said.

A logging deal authorised by co-premiers Prince Ranariddh and Mr. Hun Sen, signed in Kuala Lumpur in August during a visit by Prince Ranariddh, gives a 60-year logging concession covering four per cent of the entire country or 800,000 hectares (1.97 million acres) to the Malaysian Samling Corporation.

In comments Sunday, King Sihanouk attributed recent floods and drought to the deforestation, and said over-logging had created siltation problems, which could ruin Cambodia's freshwater fishing industry.

Cambodia's monarch, in a feisty mood, spoke briefly about the military situation.

He agreed with senior army commander Lieutenant-General Nhek Bun Chay that it would be folly to launch an attack to capture Preah Vihear Temple which stands atop the rugged Dangrek Mountains just inside Cambodia's northern border with Thailand.

"It's difficult to attack Preah Vihear from the Cambodian side," he said.

The King said Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot had eroded his last vestiges of political support by ordering his guerrilla fighters to attack rural villages.

King Sihanouk Tuesday made an impassioned appeal to thieves to stop plundering ancient, artifact-filled Angkor Temples.

"I beg all thieves, all Khmer antique lovers, Cambodian nationals and foreigners, to stop looting our temples."

"I ask them to pity Cambodia and to let all Khmer people live with all their treasures," the monarch said.

Meanwhile Cambodian troops killed five Khmer Rouge rebels and wounded several others after the guerrillas tried to overrun military positions in northwest Battambang province, Deputy Governor Nam Tum said Tuesday.

Oldest person still mischievous at 120

ARLES, France (R) — She was born in the year Bizez's Carmen was first staged and Tokyo published Anna Karenina, and a year before Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.

Frenchwoman Jeanne Calment, the oldest person in the world, celebrated her 120th birthday Tuesday, still going strong with a wit and mischievous smile which she calls the key to her longevity.

Blind, almost deaf and confined to a wheelchair, she chose a black crepe dress for the occasion, remarking: "This is good stuff, it'll last a long time."

Calment lunched on crab, duck and champagne with friends at her retirement home in Arles, in the south of France, before sharing a mammoth chocolate birthday cake with 80 guests, including France's health minister.

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— A national security bill that reduces U.S. support for U.S. peacekeeping and restricts the president's authority to place U.S. troops under foreign commanders. The Clinton administration says the House bill is an unacceptable infringement upon executive powers; Senate prospects are uncertain.

Still to come, in order of appearance:

— Regulatory reform. The House this week takes up a moratorium on most government regulations and a requirement to weigh costs when evaluating the benefit

of new regulations. Both chambers have already passed bills making it harder to impose new, unfunded regulations on states. Negotiators are working out a House-Senate compromise that Mr. Clinton is expected to sign.

— Legal reforms, including limits on punitive damages. Mr. Gingrich says he expects a difficult fight because of trial lawyers' lobbying clout.

— A constitutional amendment to limit congressional terms. Republican leaders refuse to say which way the vote will go.

— Welfare reform. Huge block grants are the likely outcome, after huge disagreements over what to require of governors and recipients. Some type of Senate bill is virtually assured, but Mr. Clinton's signature is not.

— Revenue measures, including a \$500-per-child tax credit and a cut in the capital gains tax rate. The contract promises are likely to be scaled back by senators worried about the budget deficit.

House Democrats, enduring what amounts to a forced march, gripe that the pace is too fast to allow thinking and the results so far haven't addressed the core economic problems of American families.

Nevertheless, the House expects to complete action on what Mr. Gingrich calls "the most decisive legislative proposal since the new deal (launched by President Franklin D. Roosevelt) began in 1933" in time to recess for Eastern on April 6. That's eight days shy of 100.

Meanwhile on a night of polite competition and a few pointed disagreements, Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas took a moment to capture the unifying spirit of the room: "The next president is not going to be Bill Clinton."

But if not, then who?

EU ministers seek animal transit compromise

BRUSSELS (Agencies) — EU farm ministers Tuesday held a second day of negotiations in an effort to break the Union's 18-month deadlock on maximum journey times for livestock.

The EU's French presidency, which has indicated that it will not schedule any further discussions of the issue during its six-month term in the EU chair if there is not a breakthrough at this meeting, tabled a complex compromise package in an effort to bridge the north-south divide that has produced the stand-off.

The northern EU states, under pressure from animal welfare campaigners, have been campaigning for limits of between eight and 15 hours on the maximum time animals can be transported across Europe and for strict controls to be imposed on hauliers covering issues such as the amount of space each animal has in lorries and the regularity of feeding and watering intervals.

But the southern states, particularly Italy and Greece, have resisted any limits, arguing that the northern, meat-exporting, countries have an economic interest in encouraging the slaughter of animals in their slaughterhouses rather than have them transported to the south.

The French compromise was based on applying different standards to different categories of animals.

The toughest standard would be applied to veal calves, lambs and kids for whom a 15 hour maximum journey time would apply with a two-hour stop becoming mandatory after the first eight hours.

For cows, sheep and goats a maximum of 24 hours is envisaged with two hours rest periods obligatory each eight hours. For the younger



Former French film actress now "veteran" animal rights campaigner Brigitte Bardot in vociferous mood as she joins other protesters of local animal protection groups in a demonstration against the transportation of live animals, outside the EC Charlemagne Building. Ms. Bardot has been active both sides of the channel in highlighting the plight of crated calves and other animals (AFP photo)

animals a new journey could not begin before 12 hours after milking.

Pigs could be transported for up to 24 hours with only a stop for watering obligatory every eight hours and if the carrying equipment meets EU standards, the maximum journey is 48 hours.

For journeys by sea, a 12-hour rest would be obligatory at the port of landing unless the period of sea transport forms part of a general route plan indicated in advance.

Although the French proposals fall significantly short of the initial demands made by countries like Britain and Germany, the northern states have a powerful incentive to agree to the deal.

In July the EU presidency passes to Spain, who will be succeeded by Italy. Neither country is expected to make a major effort to broker a compromise since the existing legislative vacuum at the

European level suits them perfectly well. They are also under little domestic pressure to address the animal welfare issue.

Britain's problem is particularly acute since the ferry companies which cross the English channel, responding to a wave of public protest about the length of animals' journeys, are refusing to carry livestock, bringing the British export industry to a virtual standstill.

British Farm Minister William Waldegrave was left facing a difficult choice between accepting a deal which might not be judged sufficient for the ferry companies to lift their ban or rejecting it and having to endure the situation for at least another 18 months.

Other problems concerned Austria, which imposes a six-hour limit in its own soil and was waiting for parliamentary clearance to approve a deal

which would significantly dilute its controls.

Ireland was also unhappy with the compromise and was seeking revision of the ferry-clause which would count sea journey time as rest time excluded from the overall journey time.

On the other side of the debate, Spanish officials indicated that they could probably go along with the French proposal.

Italy and Portugal were holding out for further concessions. But, even if they were backed by Greece, they would not have enough votes to block a deal on the French proposal in the event that the northern states decided to accept it.

On Monday, former French film star Brigitte Bardot climbed into a container lorry to join protesters, dressed as sheep, denouncing cruelty to animals transported for slaughter.

Blur sweeps Brits with four awards

LONDON (AP) — The pop band Blur won four Brit Music Awards including top British artist of the year. The first band to take four prizes in the Pop Music Awards, Blur also won Best Album for Parklife, Best Video and Best Single. Madonna headed the line-up for the presentation show at London's Alexandra Palace.

The awards, sponsored by Britannia Music are voted by an academy of 500 people, largely from the record industry. Elton John received a lifetime achievement award for his contribution to the music industry. Paul Weller, former leader of the Jam and the Style Council, was named best British solo artist, narrowly beating Eric Clapton, Seal, Morrissey and Elton Costello. Best British female solo artist was Eddi Reader, formerly lead singer with Fairground Attraction. Best British dance act was M People and best British new-comer was Oasis. The film soundtrack prize was won by Oscar-nominated Pulp Fiction, beating The Lion King. Four Weddings And A Funeral, Forrest Gump and Philadelphia. Nellee Hooper won best British producer for work with Madonna, among many other stars. Tony Morimer, star of East 17, performed with his band from a wheelchair after falling off the stage during rehearsals.



The city of Grozny lies in almost months of bombardment by Russian tanks made a breakthrough

Nonja the artistic orangutan

VIENNA (AFP) — Nonja is a charming orangutan artist, who has had four exhibitions and sells her paintings at \$400 apiece. Her talent first emerged five years ago at a medical seminar, and now at the age of 19 (equivalent to 35 years in human terms), the great ape "has made enormous progress," according to her tutor Claudia Kment.

They work together at the Schoenbrunn Zoo, reputedly the world's oldest, set in the grounds of the old imperial palace on the outskirts of the Austrian capital. Ms. Kment remembers how it all started. The zoo had already trained a chimpanzee called Jonny to draw, and wanted to experiment with an orangutan.

"We showed her what to do. She was very curious and copied our gestures with great enthusiasm," Ms. Kment said. "Bot Nonja kept going off the paper and scribbling all over the table, and she often used to eat the crayons." Then little by little Nonja learned to concentrate carefully enough to keep the drawing on the sheet of paper and began producing harmonious lines and shading. It was such a startling contrast to the "disastrous" behaviour of her companion Vladimir. "He destroyed everything, crayons, paintbrushes, he threw the pots of paint about and howled," Ms. Kment recalled. "He showed absolutely no interest in the activity and became aggressive every time."

Nonja now uses non-toxic colours which she selects after due deliberation, and only takes an occasional nibble. She tends towards sombre tones, browns, deep reds, black — yellow she avoids most of the time. The works are "abstract," comparable to the output of a human infant of two or three years. The amazing monkey has even devised a technique which gives scope for lots of variations: Clearly enjoying herself, Nonja flicks drops of paint at the paper with a brush, creating a new visual effect. As artists go, this simian is quite a perfectionist. She will only paint early in the morning, for about 30 minutes, an hour at the most.

Paper: Why

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Lawmakers, journalists and even Harvard students have had little trouble contacting Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev, but Russian soldiers and sleuths cannot seem to find Russia's public enemy No. 1.

The daily newspaper Izvestia Tuesday questioned the "effectiveness and professionalism" of the Interior Ministry and the Federal Counterintelligence Service, suggesting they don't really want to capture, Mr. Dudayev.

Russia declared the rebellious leader of the breakaway Republic of Chechnya a "wanted criminal" in January, but efforts to apprehend him have been little more than empty intimidations, the newspaper said.

"(The Russian investigators) mysteriously begin to wink their eyes and flap their tongues, hinting that the days of the Chechen leader are numbered, he's surrounded, his movements are controlled," Izvestia said. Yet Mr. Dudayev continues to elude them.

Mr. Dudayev recently met with Russian businessman Konstantin Borovoi and gives frequent interviews to Russian and foreign journalists in the Chechen capital, Grozny, and elsewhere. In one recent radio interview, he answered questions posed by students and professors from Harvard University.

Burmese rebels

MAE SOT, Thailand (AP) — One of the world's longest-running insurgencies abandoned its last major stronghold Tuesday after intense shelling and gassing by Burmese troops, rebel and Thai sources said.

The Burmese rained a barrage of artillery on the Karen rebel base of Kawmoora from midnight until 3 a.m., forcing 1,400 rebels to abandon the base before dawn, said Thai Colonel Direk Yamnamreap.

Karen rebels said in interviews they did not have enough weapons and ammunition to defend the base from the attack by thousands of Burmese soldiers.

They said the Burmese troops fired an undetermined type of gas into the base, which some said made the rebels unconscious and others said stopped their breathing and made their eyes tearful.

A Bangkok-based support group for the Burmese opposition, Burma Issues, said in a statement that the "poison shells," interspersed with regular artillery, caused disorientation and unconsciousness. The group said an unknown number of rebels



Thailand tests second AIDS vaccine

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand began tests of a second AIDS vaccine Tuesday, injecting intravenous drug users who tested HIV-negative with the synthetic vaccine. Twenty volunteers were to be given the experimental vaccine and 10 others were to receive a water-and-glucose placebo in the trial, conducted by Mahidol University and the Public Health Ministry, with World Health Organisation support. The volunteers were recruited from Bangkok drug rehabilitation clinics. A first round of AIDS vaccine trials last year on volunteers who were not drug users showed that 10 out of 24 people partici-

pating had produced antibodies against the Human Immune-deficiency Virus (HIV). Thailand's National Commission on AIDS estimates that as many as 700,000 people are HIV-positive or suffer from full-blown Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Some 4,500 Thais have died of AIDS. The photograph shows Dr. Thawip Kittiyaporn (right) of Bangkok's Mahidol University injects the experimental HIV/AIDS vaccine into the arm of an unidentified intravenous drug user as part of a second-round trial of a U.S.-made vaccine to combat AIDS (AFP photo).

Trouble is bre

LONDON (R) — The future of a world treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, one of the major concerns of the post-cold war era, may now be in question because of disputes over whether and how to extend the pact.

The non-proliferation treaty (NPT) came into force in 1970 for a duration of 25 years and is up for renewal at a U.N. conference in New York which starts in April.

Covering more than 170 countries, it effectively sanctions five official nuclear powers — the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain — while committing other signatories to renounce nuclear weapons.

The major powers point to cases of nuclear smuggling following the collapse of the

Blur sweeps Brits with four awards

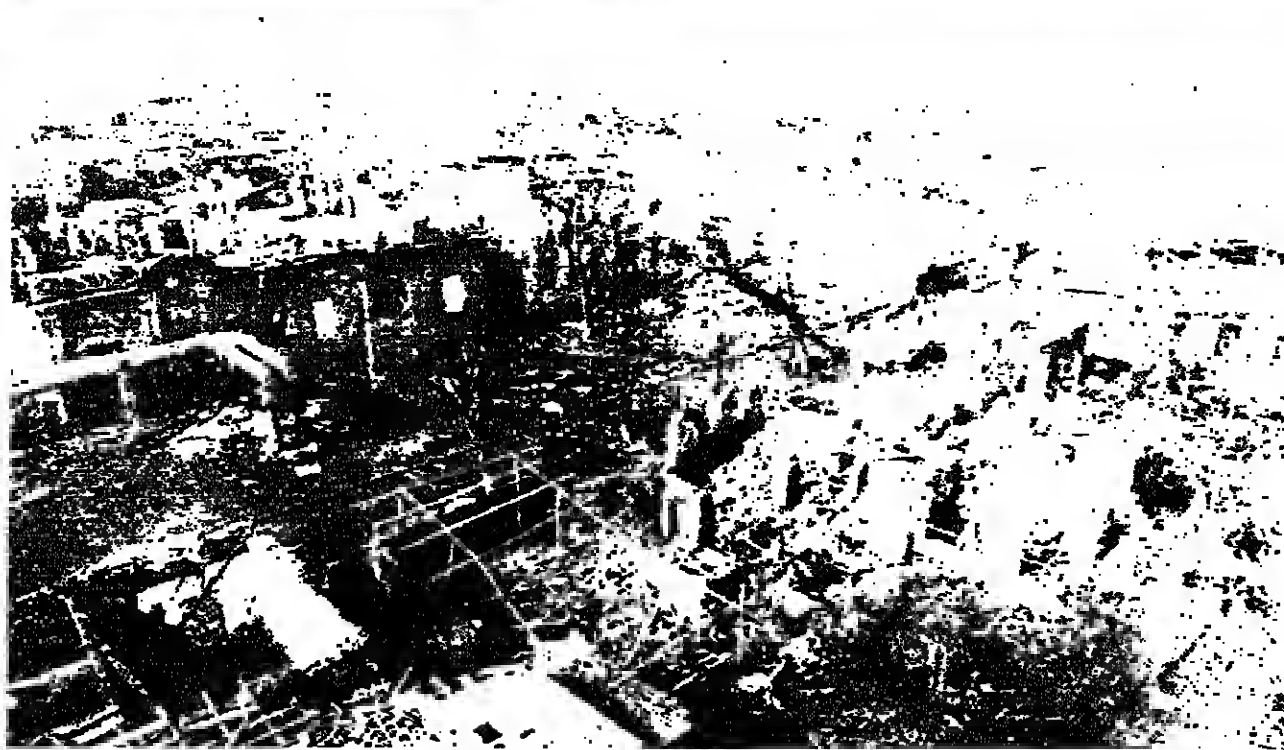
LONDON (AP) — The band Blur won four British Music Awards on Tuesday. The first band to take prizes in the Pop Music Awards, Blur also won Video and Best Single. The awards, sponsored by the British Music Industry, were presented at a ceremony in London's Alexandra Palace. The awards, sponsored by the British Music Industry, were presented at a ceremony in London's Alexandra Palace. The awards, sponsored by the British Music Industry, were presented at a ceremony in London's Alexandra Palace.

Nonja the artistic orangutan

VIENNA (AP) — Known as Nonja, a 10-year-old orangutan, has had four children in the last five years. The orangutan, who lives in a zoo in Vienna, has been the subject of a book and a television series. The orangutan, who lives in a zoo in Vienna, has been the subject of a book and a television series. The orangutan, who lives in a zoo in Vienna, has been the subject of a book and a television series.

Thai police nab man who spoke with many voices

BANGKOK (R) — Police Monday nabbed a man who spoke with many voices. The man, who was found in a public place, was taken to a hospital for treatment. The man, who was found in a public place, was taken to a hospital for treatment. The man, who was found in a public place, was taken to a hospital for treatment.



The city of Grozny lies in almost total ruin following two months of bombardment by Russian forces. A dozen Russian tanks made a breakthrough south of Grozny in a bid to surround the last rebel Chechen positions in the capital (AFP photo)

Paper: Why can't Russians find Dudayev?

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Lawyers, journalists and even Harvard students have had little trouble contacting Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev, but Russian soldiers and snipers cannot seem to find Russia's public enemy No. 1.

The daily newspaper Izvestia Tuesday questioned the "effectiveness and professionalism" of the Interior Ministry and the Federal Counterintelligence Service, suggesting they don't really want to capture Mr. Dudayev.

Russia declared the rebellious leader of the breakaway Republic of Chechnya a "wanted criminal" in January, but efforts to apprehend him have been little more than empty intimidations, the newspaper said.

"(The Russian investigators) mysteriously begin to wink their eyes and flap their tongues, hinting that the days of the Chechen leader are numbered, he's surrounded, his movements are controlled," Izvestia said. Yet Mr. Dudayev continues to elude them.

Mr. Dudayev recently met with Russian businessman Konstantin Borovt and gives frequent interviews to Russian and foreign journalists in the Chechen capital, Grozny, and elsewhere. In one recent radio interview, he answered questions posed by students and professors from Harvard University.

In addition, he is easily traceable by his satellite phone, which he uses to make frequent calls to Moscow, Izvestia said.

"His location for some reason is only a problem for federal powers," the article said.

The newspaper said that the only thing Russia's month-long "official criminal search" had produced was the seizure of Mr. Dudayev's 70-year-old brother, Bekmurza. Russian officials said he was detained in Grozny, the Chechen capital, last week, and is now being held in Moscow.

"So what is the matter... with the effectiveness and professionalism of our power structures?" Izvestia asked. "Either they don't want to find him, or they don't know how to do it."

Mr. Dudayev has been a thorn in Russia's side since he declared his tiny mountain republic independent from Russia in 1991.

Meanwhile in Grozny, Russian troops who rule the ruins of the city by day as Chechen snipers and commando squads are using the city's sewer system to infiltrate the capital, making their lives miserable after dark.

"Life here really begins once night falls," said Sasba, a 21-year-old Russian Interior Ministry soldier guarding a checkpoint on what was once the main business street of the devastated Chechen capital.

"There's an absolute curfew at night. If we see someone moving or hear a noise like breaking glass underfoot somewhere, we don't ask questions, we start shooting," he said.

Mr. Sasba pointed to burned-out, five-storey buildings less than 100 metres from his fortified post on Avturkhanov Street as an example.

"Three nights ago a sniper started shooting at us from the top floor and when we opened up with our heavy machinegun the whole building caught fire," he said.

Chechen fighters held onto Grozny through nearly two months of heavy Russian shelling and aerial bombardment, withdrawing earlier this month only after the centre of the capital had been reduced to rubble.

Russian armoured personnel carriers now roar unopposed through the city's shattered streets on patrol, throwing up huge clouds of dust.

Intimidating as the Russian presence seems, it has not prevented die-hard Chechens mounting bit and run operations.

"Some Chechens slip in during the day — young men and women who have correct papers and pass through our checkpoints," said Andrei, another Interior Ministry soldier.

"Once they're inside they create diversions or get a gun

British cabinet approves N. Ireland peace proposals

Trial of alleged pub killers begins

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major's cabinet Tuesday formally approved proposals aimed at bringing lasting peace to Northern Ireland after 25 years of violence.

The so-called framework document, the latest step in a peace process launched by the Irish and British governments in December 1993, will be published jointly by Mr. Major and Irish Premier John Bruton in Belfast Wednesday.

Protestant politicians crucial to the success of peace talks accused Mr. Major of preparing a sell-out to Dublin and ignoring the wishes of the Protestant majority in the province, who want its historical links with Britain maintained.

The document, drawn up by the London and Dublin governments and agreed six months after a truce by Catholic and Protestant guerrillas, sets out the framework for all-party talks on a political settlement.

"The government agreed that the framework document and the proposals for an accountable government in Northern Ireland should now be published in a form recommended by the Northern Ireland Secretary (Sir Patrick Mayhew)," a statement from Mr. Major's office, after a special meeting of the cabinet, said.

Irish officials said Mr. Major and Mr. Bruton will meet in Belfast Wednesday to launch the proposals in which the two countries are expected to drop or amend their respective claims to the sovereignty of the province.

Mr. Major is expected to appeal directly to the people of Northern Ireland not to reject the draft plan out of hand. He will urge them instead to study the document, 600,000 copies of which will be printed, in their own homes, officials said.

Mr. Major will point out that the proposals will go ahead only if approved by all Northern Ireland's political parties, by the London Parliament and by a referendum of the province's people.

But Unionist politicians fear the document will pander to Republicans who seek the unification of Ireland and waged a bloody 25-year battle to oust Britain from the province.

Setting out their own proposals for the future of the province Tuesday, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) said: "It would now appear that the government... hopes to use a referendum to deliver Northern Ireland's affairs into the hands of all-Ireland political institutions."

UUP leader James Molyneux said the two governments' proposals were so detailed that they amounted to "a kind of United Nations Charter."

He urged instead a six-month period of intensive, but ad hoc, talks between the Northern Irish political parties and the two governments designed to solve specific problems and build mutual confidence.

After that, he said, a Northern Ireland Assembly, could be elected gradually to take over the day-to-day administration of the province, which is at present governed directly from London.

The document is believed to include proposals for a Northern Ireland Assembly, cross-border bodies and new arrangements between London and Dublin.

Mr. Molyneux's colleague David Trimble accused the British government of failing to take Unionist views into account. "They have ignored our position," he told BBC Radio.

Ian Paisley, the fiery head of the Democratic Unionist Party, also adamantly rejected the initiative.

"I have seen what is in the document... and what I have seen... is totally and absolutely repugnant to all the Unionist people of Northern Ireland," he told British television.

Meanwhile, the trial of four men alleged to have taken part in the murder of eight customers in a loyalist attack on a pub in Greysteel, Northern Ireland, began Monday in Belfast.

On Halloween in 1993, two armed and masked men entered the Rising Sun Pub in the village of Greysteel and opened fire for several

minutes, the court heard.

A third man allegedly kept guard outside the bar with a sawed-off shotgun and a fourth drove the getaway car.

Seven people died instantly, and an eighth died six months later from his injury.

Geoffrey Deeney, 23, Stephen Irwin, 21, Torrens Knight, 25, and Brian McNeill, 26, have all denied the charge of murder.

Mr. Knight has also denied taking part in the murders of four men shot dead in a separate Ulster Freedom Fighters attack at Castlerock, County Londonderry, the previous March.

It is alleged Mr. Knight was the driver of a getaway van used in that shooting.

The Ulster Freedom Fighters claimed responsibility for the Greysteel killings, which were supposedly in retaliation for an Irish Republican Army bombing in the Protestant Shankill Road area.

In a separate development, Irish opposition leader Bertie Ahern condemned a police swoop Monday on Republican activists in Northern Ireland which provoked a street clash as British and Irish leaders prepared to spell out hopes for lasting peace.

Seven activists in Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, were detained by Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officers who also raided the party's headquarters in Londonderry, Northern Ireland's second city.

U.N. tries to negotiate aid into Bosnian enclave

SARAJEVO (R) — The United Nations sought on Tuesday to negotiate a path for aid convoys through battlefields to the encircled Bosnian Muslim enclave of Bihać, where it says thousands of civilians face starvation.

U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi met rebel Serbs from the Krajina region of Croatia in their self-styled capital Knin to plead with them to lift blockades on aid convoys to Bihać and end the "systematic harassment" of U.N. peacekeepers.

Aides suggested he would reserve the right to threaten to use military force to push aid into Bihać, though the U.N. has consistently shied away from using its muscle in the past.

"That is one of the options that has been discussed and it is on the table," said U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivanok, noting that U.N. Commander General Bertrand D. Lapresle was with Mr. Akashi in the meeting with Krajina Serb leader Milan Martić.

Krajina Serbs, working with their Bosnian Serb allies and rebel Muslims loyal to local warlord Fikret Abdić, have effectively blockaded the Bihać "safe area" in northwest Bosnia, cutting aid to more than 160,000 people.

U.N. officials and the Bosnian government, whose 5th Corps has been involved in heavy fighting in Bihać after an offensive in January, say hundreds of people and possibly thousands are close to starvation.

"The bottom line is both the Abdić forces and the Krajina Serbs are using food as a weapon of war, trying to deny food to the people of Bihać," said U.N. relief spokesman Kris Janowski.

Mr. Abdić, in a letter to the U.N. Security Council broadcast on his radio station, accused the Bosnian government and U.N. of engineering a humanitarian crisis to get international sympathy for the Bosnian Muslim cause.

"Another 'humanitarian offensive' is in sight to protect (Bosnian Muslim President) Alija Izetbegović and his 5th Corps," Mr. Abdić said. He accused the 5th Corps of fighting in a demilitarised zone and of deliberately provoking hostilities to block aid convoys.

"In fear of another counter-offensive the same infrastructure of brainwashing innocent public opinion has been started," he said.

U.N. officials and the Bosnian government, whose 5th Corps has been involved in heavy fighting in Bihać after an offensive in January, say hundreds of people and possibly thousands are close to starvation.

Mr. Abdić said in the letter. Bihać is seen as a potential flashpoint that could reignite fighting across Bosnia, subdued under a Jan. 1 ceasefire intended to lay the ground for a negotiated peace under the terms proposed by a "contact group" of major powers.

That plan suffered a setback Monday, however, when Serbia made clear it could not embrace the plan — requiring it to recognise Bosnia and Croatia — without the international community first lifting crippling sanctions imposed to penalise it for supporting Bosnian Serbs.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, who has long argued that rump Yugoslavia must be encouraged in its peace efforts, spent a weekend discussing the plan with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. But Mr. Milosevic made it clear he could not consider recognition before sanctions were lifted.

"Belgrade is categorical — first lifting of sanctions, and then everything else," the official Tanjug News Agency said.

In Bihać itself, thousands of civilians were reported by the U.N. to be going hungry after months without aid. A convoy of 10 trucks made its way into the area last week but that was the first such shipment in more than nine months.

In Geneva, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman Ron Redmond condemned what he called the "cynical exploitation of humanitarian aid as a weapon of war."

"While these people play their cynical game, innocent people are still starving in Bihać," Mr. Redmond said.

On Tuesday the U.N. said its latest aid convoy trying to get into the Bihać pocket was held up by Mr. Abdić's forces at Maljevac, near the Croatia-Bosnia border. The previous day Krajina Serb forces stopped the convoy only about 15 kilometres short of Bihać town.

The Bosnian government and the Krajina formally established official inter-state relations Tuesday in the first step towards full diplomatic ties. Interfax News Agency reported.

Diplomatic notes confirming relations were exchanged in Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Demurin told the agency.

Burmese rebels abandon last major base

MAE SOT, Thailand (AP) — One of the world's longest-running insurgencies abandoned its last major stronghold Tuesday after intensive shelling and gassing by Burmese troops, rebel and Thai sources said.

The Burmese rained a barrage of artillery on the Karen rebel base of Kawmoora from midnight until 3 a.m., forcing 1,400 rebels to abandon the base before dawn, said Thai Colonel Direk Yamngamreap.

Karen rebels said in interviews they did not have enough weapons and ammunition to defend the base from the attack by thousands of Burmese soldiers.

They said the Burmese troops fired an undetermined type of gas into the base, which some said made the rebels unconscious and others said stopped their breathing and made their eyes tearful.

A Bangkok-based support group for the Burmese opposition, Burma Issues, said in a statement that the "poison shells," interspersed with regular artillery, caused disorientation and unconsciousness. The group said an unknown number of rebels

were killed in the shelling or rendered unconscious and unable to evacuate. Some of them were reported to have died from the chemical poisoning.

The Karen said two of their troops were killed and 12 injured in the overnight attack. They had no casualty figures for the Burmese soldiers.

At 8 a.m., the Burmese soldiers occupied Kawmoora and witnesses said they executed the injured and debilitated rebels left behind, Burma Issues said.

The group said the Burmese junta "is currently demonstrating a frightful contempt for international human rights standards, international law regarding war and armed conflict, and the rights of the people."

A witness said camp Commander Gen. Htaw Hla led 1,000 troops out of the camp through the jungle deep into Burma. But Col. Direk said about 1,000 rebels took sanctuary just across the border in Thailand while another 400 fled about 10 kilometres (6 miles) north of the base to regroup. There was no immediate explanation for the discrepancy.

The Karen are among about a dozen ethnic minorities that began fighting for their own sovereignty after Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948. With about 4,000 fighters, the group is the largest and most important of the four groups still fighting for greater autonomy.

The Karen rebels, known as the Karen National Union, issued a statement in Bangkok saying they withdrew from the base to return to guerrilla warfare.

"The withdrawal of the KNU from Kawmoora must therefore be seen not as defeat but the next logical step in the reconstruction of the KNU," the rebel statement said.

The base is just across the border from Thailand and about 375 kilometres (230 miles) northwest of Bangkok.

In Rangoon, military sources confirmed they had forced the Karen out of the base after a final two-week long push. They said Karen defectors, who had been aiding Burmese soldiers in the offensive, were clearing the mines surrounding the base to occupy Kawmoora.

The Burmese junta in December broke the unilateral ceasefire it declared in 1992

Ecuador, Peru trade charges of truce violations

LIMA (AP) — Ecuador and Peru once again accused each other of breaking a week-old ceasefire in their border war, as an advance team of military observers was due to arrive in the disputed jungle area Tuesday.

Peru's Joint Armed Forces Command said late Monday that Ecuadorian troops were being dropped by helicopter over the border zone, forcing Peruvian troops to defend their positions at Cueva De Los Tayos, Base Sur and Tiwinza.

Earlier Monday, Ecuador's military command charged that Peruvian forces were moving aggressively to try to consolidate those same positions, where the Ecuadorians were being "permanently harassed by infiltrating Peruvian patrols."

The military bases are among several outposts that have been the object of conflicting claims by both countries since their border war broke out Jan. 26.

Adding to the confusion, Ecuadorian Defence Minister Jose Gallardo accused Peru Monday of "building false Tiwinzas" to prove the border post was in their hands.

Journalists who braved a rugged jungle trek to the disputed border area have been sending conflicting reports on who is in control of the military posts, which in most cases appear to consist of a few tents pitched in a clearing.

Ecuador and Peru signed a ceasefire agreement Friday calling for a demilitarised zone and for a team of international military observers to monitor the ceasefire in the disputed border area in the Andes Cordillera range.

Meanwhile, an advance team of military observers was due to arrive in the border area Tuesday to monitor the border under terms of the ceasefire while a final diplomatic settlement is negotiated.

Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States, which guaranteed the 1942 Rio Protocol that set the current disputed frontier and helped mediate an end to the latest fighting, will provide the 20 diplomats and army troops set to serve as observers. Later, some 20 more observers are to be sent in.

The guarantors will send in their advance team under Brazilian Brigadier General Ariel Pereira Da Fonseca to establish a demilitarised zone. The two countries also have agreed to exchange prisoners within 90 days.

The observers will be flown on a Brazilian military C-130 to the southern Ecuadorian city of Cuenca, from which they will travel to the town of Gualaquiza on the Ecuadorian side, and to the border zone itself.

It was not clear how long they would spend along the border before crossing to the town of Piura on Peru's side.

But their mission could be extended past the 90-day time frame if necessary, under the ceasefire accord.

It also remains to be decided whether the international observers will help in the actual demarcation of the



78-kilometre (48-mile) unmarked border. If Ecuador and Peru agree to that, cartographers and geographers would be sent in for the effort.

Peruvian military sources said late Monday that two Ecuadorian helicopters had strafed Base Sur and Tiwinza over the weekend without causing injuries among the Peruvian defenders.

The Peruvian high command said that helicopters were also transporting troops and supplies into the border area, in violation of the ceasefire agreement.

Peru, the statement added, "has not carried out any aerial flights or military operations" in the border area.

Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori Monday cancelled a trip to the border area to prove his claims that the Peruvian flag flies over the disputed military posts, a presidential spokesman said without providing reason for the cancellation.

Trouble is brewing as world reviews nuclear treaty

LONDON (R) — The future of a world treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, one of the major concerns of the post-cold war era, may now be in question because of disputes over whether and how to extend the pact.

The non-proliferation treaty (NPT) came into force in 1970 for a duration of 25 years and is up for renewal at a U.N. conference in New York which starts in April.

Covering more than 170 countries, it effectively sanctions five official nuclear powers — the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain — while committing other signatories to renounce nuclear weapons.

The major powers point to cases of nuclear smuggling following the collapse of the

Soviet Union and the crises over Iraq and North Korea as examples of new dangers.

They want the treaty to be extended indefinitely and unconditionally, preserving the nuclear status quo. To achieve this, they need a simple majority of NPT signatories, currently more than 85 votes.

But diplomats say it is far from clear that the number is within their grasp.

Some other states, many of them in the developing world, say that the United States, Russia and others must do more to cut their arsenals and agree a formal ban on nuclear testing.

They also accuse the big powers of hypocrisy and of simply wanting to preserve an exclusive, secure club.

Some countries widely believed to have nuclear weapons, including Israel, India and Pakistan, have not signed the NPT. Arab states and Iran argue that the West has been prepared to overlook this in the case of Israel, its Middle East ally.

Egypt is now locked in a fierce dispute with Israel over the Jewish state's refusal to sign the NPT, adding further complications to the already fragile Middle East peace process.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, whose country currently chairs the 11-nation Non-Aligned Movement, accused nuclear weapons states Tuesday of failing to live up to their treaty obligations.

"The NPT has not been fully implemented by nuclear countries, especially on dis-

armament and nuclear testing and on giving a guarantee that they will not attack the non-nuclear ones," he told reporters.

Non-Aligned countries, a grouping which covers mostly developing countries that declined to take sides during the cold war, had not yet decided whether to support indefinite extension of the treaty. Mr. Alatas said.

As a result of such problems, diplomats say, it is not yet clear whether the United States and its allies will get the number of votes they need to extend the treaty.

Diplomats say those in favour currently number close to 70 countries, still well short of the target. They include members of major Western institutions like NATO and the union.

Drop the m... keep mind

By James P. Grant
This article was written
shortly before Mr. Grant's
death on Jan. 28

NEW YORK — Illness has forced me to resign as executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund after 15 years. It has been a privilege to serve as noble as that of the world's children, who are our collective future. From my hospital bed, I would like to share some personal concerns.

As the United States rethinks and reforms its social and foreign aid policies, we must ensure that children — American children and the poorest children in the world's poorest countries — are not caught in the political cross fire. Bipartisanship for children has worked well in the past; it can work now.

To ensure that their well-being is not inadvertently sacrificed to partisan or ideological interests, Americans must reaffirm that children constitute a special case requiring consistent bipartisan action and a first call on society's resources.

Four years ago, the World Summit for Children set ambitious goals: a major reduction in child deaths; a halving of child malnutrition; immunisation levels of 90 per cent; complete eradication of polio; an end to iodine deficiency, which causes most cases of preventable mental retardation; a drastic reduction in the number of children who go blind; an effective primary education for at least 80 per cent of girls as well as boys; clean water and safe sanitation for all communities; and universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Some of these goals were to be achieved by 1995, others by 2000. Most industrial nations have already achieved these targets. But in impoverished inner cities of wealthy and developing countries alike, reaching them is an urgent priority.

Achieving the goals will mean that some 2.5 million fewer children will die in 1996 than in 1990. Tens of millions will be spared the insidious sabotage wrought

Kuwait emb...

By William MacLean
Reuter

KUWAIT — Kuwait's government and opposition are keeping one eye firmly on parliamentary elections next year as they square off for a high-stakes tussle over the economy.

Both have political hopes riding on the outcome of a dispute that could affect the economy for years and decide parliament's political complexion until the end of the century, analysts say.

The argument is about two intertwined issues. The first is how to settle \$20 billion in long-standing private sector debt owed by a few thousand wealthy individuals and companies.

The government has sparked parliamentary fury by suggesting debtors be allowed softer terms of settlement to end a problem that has enfeebled the banking system for a decade.

The other issue is a government call for Kuwaitis to start paying fees for heavily subsidised public services to

PLO wants wid...

(Continued from page 1)

"waste of time" Israel's "Jenin first" proposal under which the Palestinians would take over administration of the West Bank town without Israel withdrawing its troops.

Ahead of the meeting Mr. Arafat insisted on a rapid Israeli pullback.

"Israeli leaders are shilly-shallying and making several pretexts including security," the Palestinian leader charged in an interview with the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat.

Mr. Arafat arrived in Cairo from Tunis where he failed to convince the PLO's Political Department chief Farouk Kaddoumi to take part in the Executive Committee meeting.

Mahmoud Abbas, a former negotiator who helped to draw up the Oslo autonomy

Washington Watch

One state's view of Arab concerns

By Dr. James Zogby

THE ARAB-American Institute recently sponsored a poll in the northeastern state of New Hampshire. We were partners in the poll with Fox television news of New York City and the New York Post. The pollster was the John Zogby Group of New York.

While the New York media focused its attention on the poll's questions on presidential politics, we commissioned our portion of the poll to develop ideas for the types of issues that Arab-Americans could and should raise in the upcoming 1996 elections. In American politics, this is known as "testing the waters," that is, looking for a general idea of where public attitudes are at the moment. New Hampshire is a key state since it is the site of the first presidential primary in the U.S., and in many ways a test of New Hampshire voters is a good indication of how voters think nationally.

The poll indicates that, if we are going to establish our case to support the Arab countries, we have serious work to do. But it also shows the ease from which we will have to work; and in some cases that ease is solid while in most cases it will require some work. Among the positive findings was a much lower than expected anti-Arab-American and anti-Muslim sentiment. In fact, the attitudes towards these two groups were about the same as attitudes towards Asian-Americans and American-Jews — which shows that an initial goal of our empowerment project, allowing us to function as other ethnic groups do, is being realised. This provides a solid basis for our political work.

Another positive finding in the poll was that Egypt once again outpaces Israel in popularity. Egypt's favourable rating was 42 per cent, while its unfavourable rating was 32 per cent. The figures for Israel were 44 per cent favourable and 40 per cent unfavourable. While Israel's favourable rating was slightly higher, Egypt's net rating (subtracting the unfavourable rating from the favourable rating) came out to be 10 per cent, markedly higher than Israel's four per cent.

Other Arab countries did not fare as well, but most showed an improvement over polls done in previous years. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, for example, showed identical 39 per cent favourable ratings compared with identical 44 per cent unfavourable ratings. Jordan had a 31 per cent favourable rating with an unfavourable rating of 45 per cent.

Lebanon has not yet recovered from the strong negatives engendered by its 17-year civil war, and the hostage-taking and the bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps barracks which many Americans still associate with that country. Lebanon's favourable rating was a low 19 per cent and its unfavourable rating was a high 60 per cent. Surprisingly, the same is true of the Palestinians. The positive feelings the peace accords brought out were outweighed by decades of anti-Palestinian propaganda which still shapes many attitudes, leaving the Palestinians rating of only 19 per cent positive to 64 per cent negative.

By comparison, Germany rates a 74 per cent favourable and 15 per cent unfavourable, Mexico 47 per cent favourable and 40 per cent unfavourable, and Russia 45 per cent favourable and 40 per cent unfavourable.

More importantly, when New Hampshire voters were asked whether they support continued foreign aid to countries which receive such assistance, only 20 per cent support aid to Egypt and the same number support aid to the Palestinians while 32 per cent support continued aid to Israel. At the same time, 49 per cent support aid to Russia and 42 per cent support aid to Mexico.

The poll indicates that Egypt, in particular, has a standing that is strong enough to make it an issue on the

agenda, but that alone will not put it on the agenda. Work must be done. For example, Egypt's position on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) — that it will not sign the treaty unless and until Israel also signs it — should be supported. If the demand that Israel sign the treaty is stated as an Egyptian position, it can garner strong public support.

It also appears that U.S. aid to Egypt is not popular precisely because Egypt has never actively stated its case for this aid. Instead, the aid is viewed as tied to the aid to Israel as a part of the Camp David accords (a position adopted in order to win congressional support). But as the silent partner in this arrangement, Egypt has never used its popularity to lay out the case for the aid, as shown by the fact that aid to Egypt is much less popular than the country as a whole. (Note that the ratio of support for Israeli aid to support for Israel as a whole is 1/2, while the same ratio for Egypt is 1/2; there is a reservoir of positive feeling for Egypt that has not yet been tapped on the foreign aid question). Lebanon and the Palestinians, it is clear, have serious work to do. Lebanon, and Lebanese-Americans in particular, have for too long rested on their past glories. They have failed to appreciate the tremendous damage done to Lebanon's reputation over the past two decades. A national campaign for Lebanon is clearly in order if public opinion is to consider Lebanon in the more positive light it deserves.

So, too, is the case with the Palestinians. Unfortunately, the PLO has never taken seriously the need to do meaningful public relations work in the U.S. Even after the Madrid peace conference when U.S. public opinion was ready for a change, the Palestinian leadership did not make a concerted effort to reshape U.S. opinion. The PLO office is still understaffed, underfunded and without a directive or a mandate to fully engage in a U.S. public relations campaign.

When I raise the importance of this issue to various Arab leaders, I am frequently asked three questions:

Can it be done?

Is it important to do it?

How could it be done?

Can it be done? Ask the Saudis. While Israel has a plus 4 rating and Saudi Arabia has a minus 5, given the fact that the poll has a margin of error of +/- 4.5 per cent, the Saudi and Israeli ratings are virtually statistically equal.

Imagine: Israel with the most powerful foreign lobby in Washington, with the support of a tremendously influential Jewish community and an extraordinarily successful public relations effort is now only viewed as slightly more favourable than Saudi Arabia, if at all. Why? Because, over the past five years, the Saudis have waged a public relations battle in the U.S. Despite the enormous cultural and religious differences between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, and despite the fact that most Americans historically tend to resent countries they expend lives and dollars to defend, Saudi Arabia's campaign has succeeded in turning U.S. opinion into a more favourable view of the kingdom. (A poll just three years ago showed Saudi Arabia with a 32 per cent favourable and 48 per cent unfavourable rating).

Is it important? Since the U.S. Congress shapes so much of U.S. foreign policy and perceptions of what is popular and acceptable, it is critically important to have or win a favourable public opinion rating.

Each time the pro-Israel side shapes the public debate on a question, they succeed to some degree in influencing public policy. Elements of this community are still, as I have noted for months, engaged in a strategy to discredit Saudi Arabia (as unstable, bankrupt and backward), or

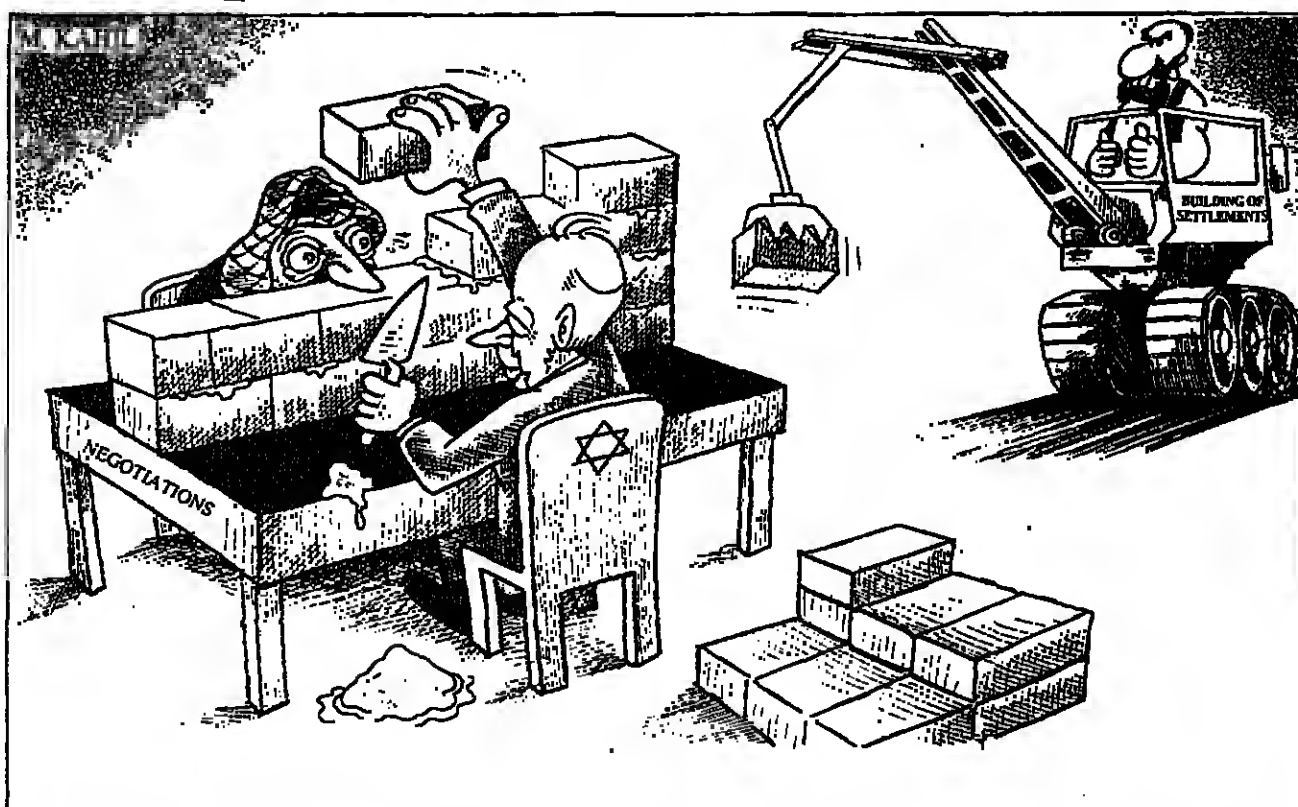
Real peace is not on Rabin's agenda

By Jamil Hilal

ISRAEL IS to build 30,000 new homes in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem in the coming three or four years. The disclosure, some 16 months after the signing of the Oslo accords between the PLO and Israel, of the Israeli plan, provides one more piece of evidence that peace with the Palestinians is not on the agenda of the present Israeli Labour coalition government. It is becoming clearer every day that the Rabin government finds even the Oslo agreement, with its built-in bias against an equitable peace that would guarantee self-determination to the Palestinians, a nuisance as it arrogantly pursues the imposition of its own settlement, using towards that end the favourable balance of power at the bilateral, regional and international levels.

The fact that Israel, in the Oslo accords, recognised the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people has misled many Palestinians into believing that such recognition was an indirect way of acknowledging their national rights. It soon became more obvious, however, that the Israeli move was devoid of substantive significance, since it excluded accepting the right of Palestinians to an independent state, let alone the stipulated U.N. solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees (i.e. General Assembly Resolution 194, which specifies their right to return or compensation).

Not content with the one-sided nature of the Oslo agreement, which accorded Israel PLO recognition without any Israeli commitment to either withdraw from the 1967-occupied Palestinian territories or to accept the Palestinian right to self-determination, Israel has been busy since the signing of the declaration of principles in September 1993 trying to predetermine the outcome of the "final status negotiations" scheduled to start by 1996. It has done this by continuing the business of occupation and colonial settlement as if there were no peace negotiations with the Arab



states, or any agreement with the PLO. In fact, Israel has selected to implement from the accords only those aspects which highlight its complete control of borders, all security matters in the Palestinian "self-rule" area and the rest of the occupied territories, and which grant it a veto on all matters of importance to Palestinian life. In this, Israel has benefited from the absence in the Oslo accords of an independent international mechanism for implementing the agreements between the two parties: The more so since, notwithstanding its self-styled role as "honest broker" in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the U.S. has thrown its weight behind its strategic ally.

As the more powerful, Israel is left in complete control of which aspects of the agreements with the Palestinian side it implements and when; hence the delay in transferring the specified functions to the Palestinian authority and in the various tactics being used to get round the redeployment of Israeli troops in the West Bank (away from population centres) as a prerequisite for elections to the self-rule council. The

redeployment of Israeli troops stipulated by the accords should have been completed by July 1994 so that general elections could take place; yet Israel is still procrastinating on this vital aspect of the agreement. The heightened settlement activity in the West Bank, the continued shooting of Palestinians (including policemen) by the Israeli occupying army and special units, the continued detention of over 5,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails, the use of collective punishment, the passing in the Knesset of a law banning PLO activities in Jerusalem, Israel's unilateral freeze of its economic agreement with the PLO, together with the worsening of economic conditions, have led to fast-growing disillusionment and disappointment among Palestinians.

The hope that the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, despite their inherent political imbalances, would open the door to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state has been dashed by the Rabin government's antagonism to the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people. These rights and aspirations

were embodied in Palestine National Council (PNC) resolutions, particularly those adopted in 1988, and were highlighted by the Intifada. This hostility has been most obvious since the Oslo accords and its follow-up agreements in several areas: expansion of settlement activity; the building of roads (at a cost of \$500m) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip connecting these settlements directly to Israel; and the refusal — under the guise of concern for the security of the settlers — to redeploy troops from the population centres of the West Bank as had been specified in unambiguous terms, and doing everything to predetermine, prior to final status negotiations, the future of East Jerusalem, borders, and the limits and nature of Palestinian "sovereignty."

In all these issues the Israeli government behaves towards the Palestinians as no more than a national minority whose human rights do not exceed administrative and cultural autonomy. Hence the powers it is proposing for the Palestine National Authority (PNA) in the self-rule area hardly match those of a local authority in a Euro-

pean country. In reality, all the issues dealing with Palestinians' effective control over their lives in any meaningful way are postponed to a final phase of the negotiations, and the lack of any mechanism for implementation have spurred the Israeli government, with tacit U.S. support, to regard the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip as disputed and not occupied territories, and to continue "creating facts" in the territories to decide their future. What emerges from Israeli actions and plans in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is a Palestinian population contained, after the annexation of East Jerusalem with enlarged municipal boundaries (constituting nearly 22 per cent of the total area of the West Bank), in a number of "pockets" or "reservations" which are surrounded and dominated by blocks of Israeli settlements, and supervised by a Palestinian council that lacks any legislative powers and is subject to the pressures and demands of the Israeli government.

The Oslo agreement has fractured the unity of the Palestinian people between those residing in the occu-

pled territories, and those in exile (mostly as refugees). Now Israel is trying to fragment those Palestinians living in the territories into "reserves" allotted to them by Israel on land left after it has completed its annexation for its colonising settlers and their security. It is this forced Israeli settlement, rather than the concern to find a political settlement entailing an end to the occupation, that mocks the peace and demands an immediate review of Palestinian political strategy. The issue of settlement activity and Jerusalem must occupy a central place in this strategy.

The PLO and the Palestine National Authority have a duty and an opportunity now to mobilise support from all quarters on a platform that gives absolute priority to the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and that would suspend negotiations with Israel until this happens. The PLO and the PNA should insist on tackling the question of Arab Jerusalem now and not leave it to the final status phase of the negotiations, since Israel is going ahead in changing this historic and unique city which Palestinians wish to see restored as the capital of their future state.

The agenda of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations therefore needs restating so that it centres on the issues of dismantling Israeli settlements, Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territory occupied in June 1967, and the establishment of a Palestinian state, and on the means of addressing the acknowledged rights of Palestinian refugees as an integral part of the Palestinian people. If these issues are not addressed, then whatever emerges will not be peace but an imposed settlement that deliberately ignores the rights and aspirations of the historically wronged party in the conflict.

Jamil Hilal is a Palestinian writer living in Britain. He is a member of the Palestine National Council. This article is reprinted from the East International.

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Gimmick for a day

ISLAMIST AND leftist deputies stage-managed some sort of a parliamentary coup yesterday when they collaborated to prevent the last meeting of the Lower House of Parliament in the second ordinary session from convening. That they did to stop the House from discussing a draft legislation that would repeal three laws which prohibit the sale of land to Israelis and impose an economic boycott against the Jewish state.

While the opposition has thus succeeded in putting off debate of the bill until Parliament reconvenes either in May or June, as is widely expected, we wonder whether the whole move was in fact more than a public relations stunt. For it does not make much political sense, at least from a judicial point of view, to start a tug of war between the government and the coalition of parliamentary groups opposed to the peace treaty over this particular issue.

The government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker had hoped that Parliament would have yesterday referred to its Judiciary Committee a 1973 law that prohibits and penalises the sale of real estate to Israelis, a 1958 law that slams total economic boycott against Israel and a 1953 law that forbids trade and commerce with the Jewish state. Some of these legislations carry the death penalty for violators. There are clearly other laws that are less obvious or direct, which can be construed as repugnant to the peace treaty.

The dispute over this issue is unnecessary because, from a strictly juridical sense, any treaty that is ratified by the government supercedes any other national legislation. This means that any piece of legislation, which is contrary to any such treaty, will not be upheld in a court of law. Since the Jordanian-Israeli treaty was approved by both chambers of Parliament and was accordingly ratified by the King, there can be no grounds or justification to oppose any legislative initiative to amend or repeal laws that run counter to the letter or spirit of its terms. As for the emotionally charged issue of land sale to Israelis, there is in place sufficient safeguards to prevent any panic. Foreigners, including Israelis, can purchase land only within municipal boundaries and even then only after a cabinet approval. If many Jordanians feel so strongly about not selling real estate to Israelis or any other group of foreigners, all they would have to do is exercise restraint and avoid becoming easy prey to manipulators and exploiters. True, national sentiment can be best promoted by public awareness of all probable dangers that may lie ahead. But people do not need the stick of the law to stop selling any part of the homeland to any side, be it Israeli or otherwise.

Just as there is no law and there can be no sustainable law that would force people to sell land to foreigners, the same goes for the areas of trade and commerce. The government, on the other hand, is legally bound to do all that is necessary to streamline all the country's laws so that they become harmonious with its old and new international obligations. Any other course would be both illegal and illogical.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in al Ra'i daily Tuesday called on Arab countries to support Egypt's bid to force Israel to abandon its nuclear programme, stressing that nuclear weapons in the region posed a serious threat to all Arabs. Hosni Avesh said that Israel is the only country in the region which possesses nuclear weapons. For its part, the United States condones Israel's actions, helps it to mass nuclear weapons and continues to supply it with economic and military assistance, said the writer. At the same time, he said, we see the United States trying to force Egypt to renew its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to deny the Arabs the right to arm themselves against potential threat from the Jewish state.

It is the duty of the Arab countries not to leave Egypt alone facing the American pressure and the Israeli arrogance, said the writer. Israel's nuclear monopoly in the area is dangerous because it means continued Israeli hegemony over the entire region and a direct threat to the Arab Nation's future, added the writer. The alternative to Israel's abandoning its nuclear programme, said the writer, is for the Arabs to possess their own nuclear might in order to protect themselves and deter Israel's plans in their region.

COMMENTING on the deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian talks over the implementation of the second phase of the Oslo agreement, a writer in Al Dostour said that the Palestinians should persevere and never retreat from their legitimate position. Saleh Qullah said that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has wisely chosen to remain steadfast in the self-rule areas rather than listen to calls from within the Palestinian people to withdraw and return to Tunis. Any withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is tantamount to another catastrophe, said the writer who added that return to Tunis by the Palestine National Authority (PNA) would mean an escape from responsibility. The writer said that the Palestinian leadership ought to insist that Israel redeploy its forces in the West Bank and that Palestinians be allowed to hold their planned elections as stipulated in the Oslo deal. Furthermore there should not be any suspension or freezing of the Israeli-Palestinian talks as this would benefit the Israelis and would mean running away from responsibility of meeting the challenge, added the writer. The writer said that the self-rule constituted the first step in the Palestinians drive to attain their national aspirations and, therefore, the Palestinians should cling hard to their rights and strive to fulfill their national dream.

Ex-Soviet republics cooperate to maintain elite athletic standards

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russians lost more than Sergey Bubka and a handful of other stars when the Soviet Union collapsed four years ago.

The flight of talent to newly independent republics — the Ukraine in polevaulter Bubka's case — was the first shock for Boskomsport, the central committee that built the Soviet Union into a post-war sports super power.

A second blow was lack of funds as sport slipped down the priority list in a country gripped by an economic crisis. A more long-term effect is only now being fully appreciated. The break-up of the Soviet Union cut Russia off from training centres spread across the former empire — the cradles of Moscow's sporting greatness.

These training centres are essential if Russia is to continue to produce elite athletes, so Moscow is desperately keen to get them back.

Last month, the plan started to fall into place when nine of the 15 former Soviet republics, at the behest of Moscow, met to form an association to foster sporting co-operation.

The National Olympic Committees of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan and Turkmenia pledged their support and Latvia and Belorussia sent observers.

Vitaly Smirnov, the 60-year-old president of the Russian Olympic Committee, was appointed head of the new organisation and has made no secret of his ambitions. The main goal, he said, was to maintain the positions of the former Soviet Union in sport.

The common use of sports facilities was high on the agenda, with the Russian especially interested in what the vice-president of the Armenian Olympic Committee, Razmik Stepanian, had to say.

Generations of elite Soviet athletes have passed through Tzakhkadzor — a high-altitude training centre in Armenia, whose facilities are unmatched and sorely missed by Russian competitors today.

"Tzakhkadzor is the best facility we ever had in the old Soviet Union," said Anatoly Kolesov, the head of the

Russian delegation for the 1996 Atlanta Games.

"The entire country (Soviet Union) was responsible for building this centre."

Tzakhkadzor, built in 1968, is equipped for the training of athletes in all Olympic sports, all year around.

When the Soviet empire collapsed in December 1991, Russian athletes lost the opportunity to train there. Armenia's war with neighbouring Azerbaijan has affected Tzakhkadzor, whose facilities have suffered damage and neglect.

There is hope, though. Stepanian has promised that the training centre will be re-opened to the Russians once more and Kolesov said that he will visit the centre in May.

"At the moment, we are forced to train in Krasnodar (Russia) or travel to Bulgaria. We end up spending a lot more money than we would at Tzakhkadzor. The Armenians have offered us to train there at the price of 15 U.S. dollars per person per day," said Kolesov.

Russian rowers have lost their training centre in Menechur, Azerbaijan, and athletes have been deprived of their base at Sukhumi in Abkhazia.

"We came to the conclusion that by helping each other, we can become a much bigger force at the Olympics," said Vladimir Vasin, the 1972 Olympic gold medalist in diving and now the first vice president of the Russian Olympic Committee.

"It is impossible to survive without integrating our efforts, our scientific base, our knowledge and experience in training world-class athletes. I am convinced that in the future, others such as Ukraine, Belorussia and the Baltic states will join our association," he added.

Irina Privolova, the Russian sprint star, still trains on a dilapidated Moscow university track but continues her yearly altitude training sessions in April in the Caucasus.

But even that venue in Kislovodsk is under threat, only 70 kilometres away from Grozny, the Chechen capital and centre of a war zone.

Australia to buy Russian sports secrets

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australia aims to boost their gold medal prospects for the 2000 Sydney Olympics by paying the Russians a \$1 million for their sporting secrets.

A committee of sports administrators has been set up to negotiate final details for the hire of Russian help for key sports in which Australia remains weak: athletics, boxing, judo, shooting, wrestling and weightlifting.

Russia will be paid a down-payment of \$330,000 and the remainder in two or three instalments. The deal was finalised during a recent visit here by Russia's Atlanta Olympic team chief Anatoly Kolesov, the former Soviet vice-minister for sport.

Russia will provide details of training, coaching, biomechanical research, sports psychology, biochemistry, diet and the monitoring of competitors' results.

Athletes, coaches and sports scientists will also be exchanged. Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) director of sport Craig McLatchey said.

"Training loads and biomechanical methodology is something we do not understand as well as the Russians," said McLatchey. "We will be buying 70 years of Russian success."

Australia, which dominated last year's Commonwealth Games in Canada, has already seen the benefits of top coaches from the former Soviet bloc and China and would dearly love to match major sporting nations such as the United States, Russia and Germany in the Olympics.

Australia won 27 medals, including seven gold, at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and McLatchey said an analysis of past performance and future possibilities indicated a tally of 60 with 20 gold possible. That would put Australia fifth at the Sydney Olympics.

"It is a challenging target, but we think a realistic one for the year 2000 with Russian help now and the critical thing is to improve our performance in those sports which have been targeted."

Before the Soviet Union's break-up, its athletes dominated the Olympic medal tally and Russia appears to be continuing the tradition if its recent sporting successes are a guide.

The Australian government already allocates substantial funding to sporting development through the Institute of Sport, which has specialist academies in Canberra and a number of other centres.

The institute already employs former East German Heiko Salzwedel for road cycling, Russian Gennadi Turetski for swimming, Romanian Reinhold Hartschi for rowing and China's Jui-Ping Tian for women's gymnastics.

IOC vows to help fight drugs

ROME (AP) — The top Olympic official denounced the abuse of drugs and doping by athletes, but said he was convinced the problems were surmountable.

"Violence, drug abuse, AIDS and doping are now the constant concern of society and government alike," said Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, in his opening speech at a two-day conference of sports officials and athletes.

Samaranch insisted on separating the issues of drug abuse from doping by athletes seeking to improve their performance.

"The problem we have in sports is not drugs, but doping. This is a completely different thing and we've been fighting it for a long time and have had good results," Samaranch said after his speech.

But cases of athletes using performance-enhancing drugs occur regularly. In October, seven Chinese swimmers — including women's world champions

Lu Bin and Yang Aihua — tested positive for drugs at the Asian Games in Japan and were banned from competition for two years.

At the conference, Samaranch signed an agreement with the U.N. International Drug Control Programme in which they pledged to join together to prevent drug abuse in young people through the promotion of a healthy life style.

The 31 delegations present at the conference are expected to adopt a final document containing more specific suggestions on how to combat the problem on Tuesday.

The main objective for the Olympic movement is to contribute to preventive education, to draw the youth away from these mortal dangers and towards practicing sports for their well-being," said Samaranch.

Five athletes representing their countries read a testimonial vowing to pass on the positive values they learned from practicing sports to youngsters around the world.

The athletes were: Soccer players Roberto Baggio of Italy, Kazuyoshi Miura of Japan, Abel Balbo of Argentina, track and field athlete Venuste Niyongaho of Burundi and Australian rugby player Michael Lynagh.

"The elite Olympic sportsman and woman is a model to follow for young people. In him are reflected the values of the Olympic spirit such as competitiveness, self-confidence, combatation, security, solidarity," said Feliciano Mayoral, secretary-general of the Association of the National Olympic Committees.

But Giorgio Giacomelli, executive of the U.N. Drug Control Programme, said there would be no additional restrictions on athletes but urged them to make a "moral commitment" to avoid drugs.

Giacomelli said the programme will also encourage the formation of sports clubs in low-income areas and promote the use of sports facilities.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Jordan dragged into baseball feud

MILWAUKEE (AFP) — Negotiations will resume here Tuesday in North America's baseball players strike, which has put Michael Jordan and other major-leaguers in uncomfortable positions. The walkout, now one week shy of reaching day 2000, began in August over a salary cap plan and wiped out last season's World Series. Pre-season workouts have started with low-level substitute players training for April openers. Talks will be restarted in Milwaukee among small groups under a backdrop of bad feelings. Management has inserted a unilateral salary change clause into new contracts, a move the union has protested to the U.S. Labour Relations Board. The union has also said it will consider anyone playing in any exhibition game a strikebreaker, even minor league contests among those not being considered for substitute jobs. That decision will likely prevent Jordan from getting playing time he needs to fulfil his major-league dream.

Cantona questioned by police

LONDON (R) — French striker Eric Cantona arrived at a London police station on Tuesday for questioning about his alleged assault of a soccer fan. Witnesses said Cantona, who this week returned to Britain after a holiday abroad, arrived at South Norwood Police Station, driven by his lawyer. Cantona was suspended for the rest of the season by champions Manchester United following an incident in a Premier League match against Crystal Palace on January 25. After being sent off, Cantona launched a two-footed attack on a spectator who had beckoned him.

Atlanta Games' budget walks fine line

ATLANTA (AFP) — An accountant hired to study the organisers' budget for the 1996 Olympics found a minimal emergency fund that prompted one official to ask for cutbacks in some areas. Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) officials said they were satisfied with Robbie Pound's study of their \$1.6 billion budget, which showed only the minimum \$32 million reserve fund of uncommitted money. "I think ACOG should be planning for scope reductions," said George Berry, chairman of the Metropolitan Atlanta Olympic Games Authority (MAOGA), the government group which oversees ACOG.

Bickerstaff to take over Nuggets

DENVER (AFP) — Denver Nuggets' general manager Bernie Bickerstaff, who guided Seattle to three playoff berths in his only prior coaching stint, took over coaching duties for the National Basketball Association club Monday. Bickerstaff, who was 201-203 for the

SuperSonics from 1985-1990, replaced Gene Littles, who took over when Dan Issel quit as coach earlier this season. Bickerstaff's first game as coach will be Tuesday against the Los Angeles Clippers.

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S. Korea applies for 2002 World Cup

SEOUL (AP) — The secretary-general of South Korea's World Cup soccer bidding committee left Tuesday carrying the official letter confirming his country's bid to host the tournament in 2002. The confirmation will be delivered to FIFA, the world's soccer governing body, in Zurich, Switzerland, Wednesday, six days ahead of the deadline for submissions, committee officials said. Song Young-Shik, secretary-general of the Korean bidding committee, will be joined by his country's ambassador to Switzerland, Kang Dae-Wan, in submitting the letter to FIFA secretary-general Sepp Blatter, they said.

Torrence takes women's lead

NEW YORK (AP) — Gwen Torrence used a one-hundredth second victory over Carlette Guidry in the women's 60-metre dash to wrest the Mobile Indoor Grand Prix women's overall lead from her sprint rival. Torrence's triumph, in 7.13 seconds at the Keycorp Classic at Cleveland last Friday night, gave her 70 Grand Prix points for the season. Guidry, last week's leader, now is second with 66 points, after finishing second to Torrence at Cleveland in 7.14. Jackie Joyner-Kersey, winner of the 60-metre hurdles at Cleveland and unbeaten in Grand Prix hurdles races this season, is third overall with 63 points.

Atletico sack coach

MADRID (AFP) — Atletico Madrid president Jesus Gil sacked his coach Jorge D'Alessandro on Tuesday and was expected to replace him with Argentina's World Cup coach, Alfio Basile. "If we carry on in the same way, we're heading straight for the second division," Gil told local radio. D'Alessandro lost his job two days after Atletico, 17th in the league, lost 3-1 to Real Sociedad. Their Cup win over Barcelona last week failed to save him.

"Hooligan hotline" identifies 40

LONDON (AFP) — Forty thugs believed to be responsible for last week's crowd disorder during the international against the Republic of Ireland in Dublin have been identified, thanks to the telephone "hooligan hotline" set up last week. Irish police will travel to London within the next week to meet officials of the Football Association (FA) and the National Football Intelligence Unit. The troublemakers face the prospect of standing trial in the Republic over violence that saw England's friendly abandoned after 27 minutes.

Japan and U.S. join gold rush at the World Winter University Games but Russia's skiers managed to tighten their grip on the medals table.

Japan's ski jumpers dominated the 90m hill event at Astun with Yukioka Fukita winning the gold medal, Hiroki Vesugi the bronze and Noritsuka Kasama taking fifth place.

But hours later, the Americans went one better with Michael Weiss and Damo Allen completing a one-two finish for the States in the men's figure skating at Sabinaigo.

The pair ousted China's Zhang Min, who had been leading after Sunday night's short programme but who had to settle for bronze.

The Japanese ski jumpers, who allowed Slovenia's Franci Petek to take the silver, showed the skills which have seen their nordic combined athletes take charge of the World Cup in recent years.

With a points total of 240, Fukita, who won the last hill event at the Zakopane Games two years ago, was comfortably clear of Petek (235.5), with Vesugi polling 226.5.

Weiss, who had been lying third behind Allen and Zhang after the short programme, gave a highly polished performance after landing in the free section. "It was good and clean and I got the job done and I had to do," said Weiss.

"I knew I was one of the best skaters here and I feel that I can compete with the go on to do as well if not better."

Allen, who also won the silver medal two years ago at

Kiwis edge Aussies

SAN DIEGO (AFP) — Team New Zealand beat one Australia by only 26 seconds in a fight for first place at the America's Cup Monday while the struggling French saw their backup boat lose its keel and capsize.

New Zealand's triumph put the "Black Magic" — unbeaten in 16 races except on a protest — atop the standings in the third round of the challenger trials.

But bad luck dogged the French even on a day when they trounced Spain by 6 minutes 56 seconds to break a five-race losing streak and avoid last place.

Chris Dickson's TAG Heuer boat held onto second place with an effortless 4:07 win over struggling Sydney 95 while Young America strengthened its lead in the Citizen Cup defender trials by disposing of the America3 women by 2:24.

The two New Zealand boats are scheduled to race for first place Tuesday.

The strength among the challengers lies in the South Pacific. Except for one Australia's opening loss to Nippon in the first round and a broken spreader bar that cost it a second-round race against Nippon, none of the top three has lost to anybody else. The new Australian boat had not lost until Monday.

Arsenal manager sacked

LONDON (AFP) — George Graham was sensationally sacked by Arsenal Tuesday after the club was informed of the results of the Premier League inquiry into illegal payments involving the transfer of players.

The end of Graham's Highbury reign, to most successful in the London club's history, was announced by chairman Peter Hill-Wood, who said that the manager had not acted "in the best interests of the club."

The disgraced Graham is said to have received an illicit payment of £285,000 following the £1.1 million transfer of Danish star John Jensen, from Brondby in 1992.

The announcement ended a glittering eight-and-a-half year tenure at Highbury, during which Graham has brought the club six trophies including victory in the European Cup Winners Cup last season.

A terse statement by the club read: "Arsenal Football Club have now been informed by the FA Premier League Inquiry of the results

of their investigations into alleged irregularities concerning certain transfers and the Board have concluded that Mr. Graham did not act in the best interests of the club."

"The board have therefore terminated Mr. Graham's contract as manager."

"The chairman said that it was said that Mr. Graham's distinguished career with Arsenal FC should have to end in this way and he paid tribute to Mr. Graham for the success that he had brought to the club over the past eight-and-a-half years."

Graham's dismissal comes at a crucial time in the club's disappointing season with Arsenal currently lying in the mid-table of the Premiership but only four points clear of the relegation zone.

In nine days the club will continue their defence of the European Cup Winners Cup in the first leg of their quarter-final tie against French side Auxerre.

Despite League and FA Cup disappointments, the statement clearly indicates

that the decision has been based mainly on the findings of the Premier League "bung" inquiry, which are yet to be announced.

Graham became Arsenal manager in May 1986 after a successful spell at Millwall whom he guided into the second division.

In his first season Arsenal won the League Cup, beating Liverpool in the final at Wembley, but then suffered a surprising defeat in the following year's final against Luton.

In 1989 Graham guided Arsenal to their first league title for 18 years thanks to dramatic injury-time decision by Michael Thomas in the final match of the season at Liverpool.

In 1991 Arsenal, who lost only one league match all season, became champions again, despite being deducted two points after an on-pitch brawl at Manchester United.

Two years later Graham presided over an historic FA Cup and League Cup double triumph, as Sheffield Wednesday are beaten in both finals.

Sampras coming back to Queen's

LONDON (Agencies) — Two-time Wimbledon champion Pete Sampras will make his sixth consecutive appearance at the Queen's Club

grass-court tournament on June 12-13.

Todd Martin, who beat Sampras in last year's final, has also committed to play in the most prestigious of the Wimbledon warm-up events, organisers said Monday.

Other entries include Goran Ivanisevic, Stefan Edberg, Wayne Ferreira and Patrick Rafter.

The total purse, 403,000 pounds (\$625,000), is unchanged from last year.

Queen's has been working on ways to slow down the

game. The grass at the venerable London venue is faster than that at Wimbledon, and the last two finals — Michael Stich over Ferreira in 1993 and Martin over Sampras last year — contained no breaks of serve.

Berasategui fights back

In Stuttgart, French Open finalist Alberto Berasategui came back from a slow start to defeat France's Olivier Delaite in the first round of the ATP \$2.125 million indoor tournament.

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Pass Dbl 5 Dbl

contract could be defeated.
West's heart lead was ruffed and dummy was entered with the ace of diamonds. Since every card in the black suit was marked with East, declarer chose a pretty way to lead the contract. A spade was led to the jack, the ace of spades was cashed and the declarer crossed to the tables with the king of spades.
A winning spade was led from the hand. Had East not ruffed this spade or the next, declarer would have discarded two clubs from hand, then taken the trump finesse for an overtrick. When East ruffed low, declarer overruffed, cashed the king of diamonds and crossed to the jack of diamonds to discard a club on the last spade. The defenders scored only two club tricks.

NBA g centre

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Rule changes cannot stop them. Opponents barely slow them. Even comparisons to past heroes cannot diminish their achievements.

They are the giants of the National Basketball Association (NBA), a group of centres who have dominated the league like no other tall men before them. Even after rule changes this year to emphasise size guard play, these giants size guard play, these giants size guard play.

Nigerian-born Hakeem Olajuwon and Jamaican native Patrick Ewing sparked the trend. Shaquille O'Neal, David Robinson and Zaire's Dikembe Mutombo followed.

But Giorgio Giacomelli, executive of the U.N. Drug Control Programme, said there would be no additional restrictions on athletes but urged them to make a "moral commitment" to avoid drugs.

Giacomelli said the programme will also encourage the formation of sports clubs in low-income areas and promote the use of sports facilities.

The retirements of Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson ended an era for flashy guards and the big men have inherited the throne. None has been more impressive than Orlando's O'Neal, a dunking dynamo whose 29.5 points a game leads the NBA.

"He is having a sensational season," Robinson said. "Most people can't see the little ways in which his game has stepped up from last season."

The Magic are title contenders with O'Neal being supported by the rebounding forward Horace Grant and the outside play of guard Arlene Hardaway.

"You've got to say Shaq is the MVP," Hardaway said. "He's the leading scorer. We would not be the same team without him."

Many have compared Shaq and "Penny" to the NBA's greatest 1980s tandem, Magic Johnson and centre Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. But the ex-Laker star and newest Hall of Fame inductee thinks Shaq has a way to go yet.

"Magic and I had already won national college titles before we even made it to the NBA. These guys haven't," Abdul-Jabbar said. "They have plenty of time. They will make their own statement."

Olajuwon already has. He was voted last season's Most Valuable Player after leading Houston to the NBA crown.

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Olajuwon already has. He was voted last season's Most Valuable

NBA giants remain centre of attention

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They are the giants of the National Basketball Association (NBA), a group of centres who have dominated the league like no other tall men before them. Even after rule changes this year to emphasize guard play, these giants rule.

Nigerian-born Hakeem Olajuwon and Jamaican native Patrick Ewing sparked the trend. Shaquille O'Neal, David Robinson and Zaire's Dikembe Mutombo followed while Alonzo Mourning and Dutchman Rik Smits put clubs in title contention.

NBA officials, bearing complaints that centres were becoming too dominant, shortened the three-point line and tightened defensive rules to encourage play away from the basket. But pregame scoring has remained unchanged and centres remain the top scorers.

"There are just a lot of talented players out there in the middle," Robinson said. "It goes in cycles. This is our time."

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Magic explode 152-104 over Bucks

CHARLOTTE (Agencies) — Shaquille O'Neal scored 30 points and Anfernee Hardaway added 25 as Orlando established the largest margin of victory in team history, thrashing the Milwaukee Bucks 152-104.

O'Neal scored 19 of his points in the first half as the Magic snapped a four-game losing streak.

Orlando beat Philadelphia 129-83 last Friday for the previous record and was only three points shy of tying the team record for points in a game. The Magic beat the Utah Jazz 155-116 on December 30, 1990.

Todd Day and Glenn Robinson each had 22 points as the Bucks tied a club record for largest margin in a defeat that was set in a 144-96 loss to the Jazz on Jan. 27, 1990.

Lakers 108, Supersonics 105: At Tacoma, Washington, Nicky Van Exel scored a career-high 40 points, including seven 3-pointers, as Los Angeles beat Seattle for the fourth straight time this season.

Los Angeles led 100-93 before the Supersonics trimmed the deficit to 100-98 with 1:22 left.

However, Van Exel made three free throws in the final 15.9 seconds to stave off Seattle.

Dedef Schrempf led the Sonics with 26 points and Shawn Kemp had 25 points and 14 rebounds.

Vlade Divac added 19 points and eight assists for Los Angeles.

Warriors 98, 76ers 85: At Oakland, California, Tim Hardaway scored 21 points and Donyell Marshall had 14 in his Golden State debut.

Marshall, acquired Saturday from Minnesota for Tom Gugliotta, had eight of his points in the second quarter when the Warriors took the lead for good.

Dana Barros scored 26 points to lead Philadelphia, and Scott Williams had a career-high 20 rebounds to go with his 17 points.

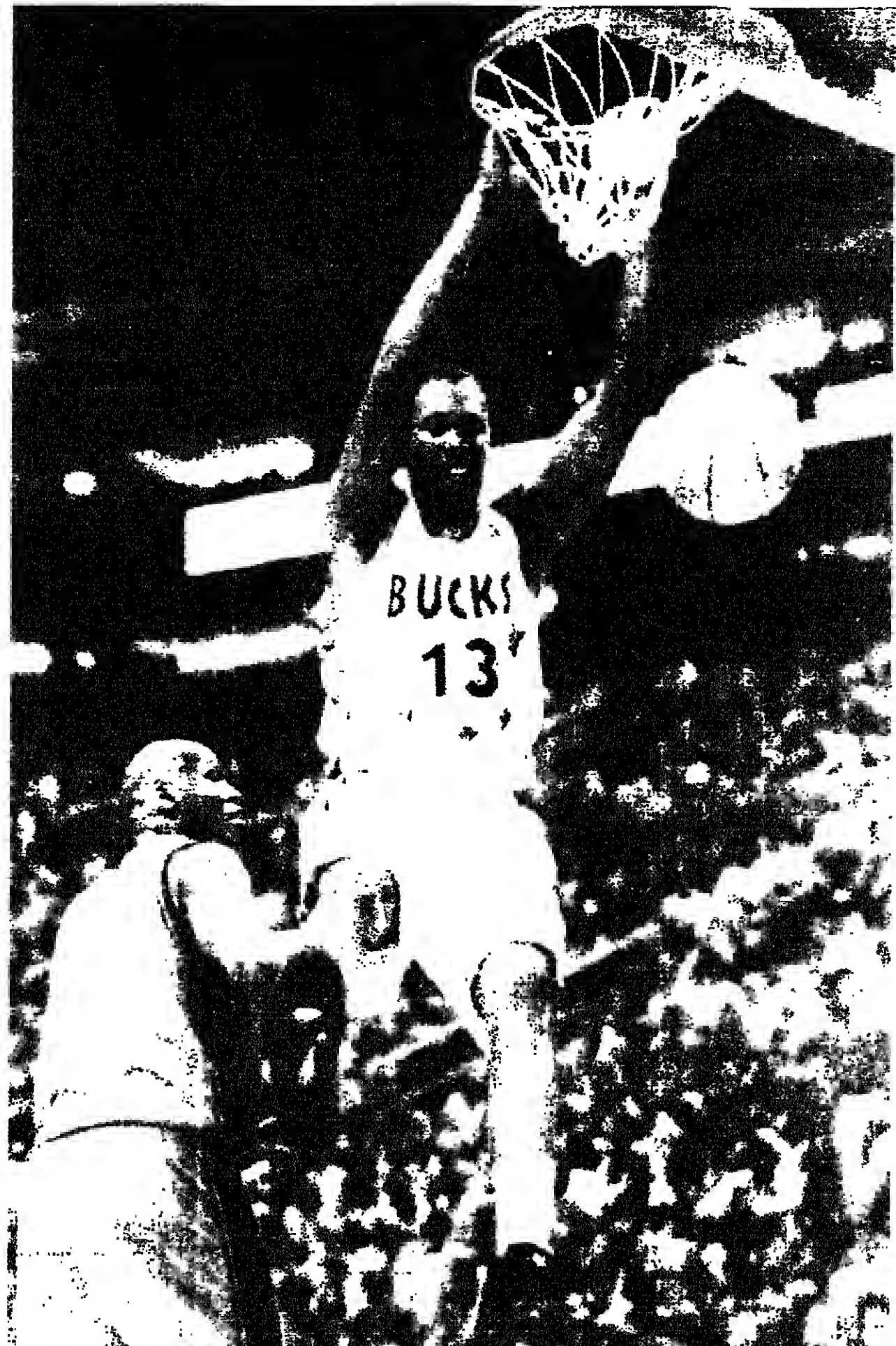
Latrell Sprewell, with 17 points, was among six Warriors in double figures as new Golden State coach Bob Lanier got his second win since taking over for Don Nelson a week ago.

Hornets 115, Bulls 104: The Charlotte Hornets held Chicago to a franchise-low nine points in the third quarter and rallied from a 19-point deficit to beat the Bulls 115-104 on Monday night.

Scott Burrell, Hersey Hawkins and Larry Johnson scored 23 points each, and the Hornets established a team record for fewest points allowed in a quarter.

Chicago led 60-43 at half-time and built its lead in the third quarter. But the Bulls were 4-for-14 shooting in the quarter and committed 14 turnovers as they were outscored 35-9.

Charlotte closed the final



No. 1 overall NBA draft pick Glenn Robinson of the Milwaukee Bucks #13 jams the ball over an opponent (AFP photo)

NBA leaders			
NEW YORK (AP) — The NBA individual scoring, rebounding and assist leaders through Feb. 19:			
SCORING			
	FG	FT	AVG
O'Neal, Orlando	587	300	29.5
Olajuwon, Houston	546	290	28.2
Robinson, S. Antonio	445	404	27.6
Malone, Utah	515	314	26.0
Jackson, Dallas	459	294	25.9
Mashburn, Dallas	419	262	24.4
Ewing, N.Y.	433	249	22.8
Richmond, Sacramento	390	212	22.5
Ceballos, LA Lakers	352	149	22.0
Screevey, G. State	336	126	21.7
Drexler, Por-Hou.	319	215	21.4
Pippen, Chicago	385	207	21.4
C. Robinson, Portland	386	191	21.4
Rider, Minnesota	380	197	21.1
Robinson, Milwaukee	391	217	20.9
Rice, Miami	375	171	20.7
Barros, Philadelphia	357	116	20.6
Hardaway, Orlando	373	227	20.6
Payton, Seattle	395	158	20.2
Mourning, Charlotte	331	276	20.0
REBOUNDING			
	OFF	DEF	AVG
Rodman, S.A.	169	318	16.2
Mutombo, Denver	204	454	13.2
Hill, Cleveland	194	334	11.5
Ewing, N.Y.	105	457	11.5
Olajuwon, Houston	115	427	11.1
Willis, Atl.-Mia.	145	329	11.0
Robinson, S.A.	127	381	10.8
O'Neal, Orlando	192	344	10.7
Jones, Dallas	190	294	10.5
Dudley, Portland	216	291	10.3
Malone, Utah	110	425	10.3
ASSISTS			
	NO	AVG	
Stockton, Utah	644	12.4	
Anderson, N.J.	449	10.2	
Bogues, Char.	470	9.4	
Hardaway, G.S.	448	9.1	
Strickland, Port.	332	8.7	
Van Exel, Lat	394	8.4	
Richardson, Lac	407	8.3	
Johnson, S.A.	390	8.1	
Blaylock, Atl.	385	7.5	
Kidd, Dall.	343	7.5	

University Games

Japan and U.S. join the gold rush

JACA, Spain (AFP) — Japan and the United States joined the gold rush at the World Winter University Games but Russia's skiers managed to tighten their grip on the medals table.

Japan's ski jumpers dominated the 90m hill event at Astun, with Yukitaka Fukita winning the gold medal, Hiroki Vesugi the bronze and Noritaka Kasama taking fifth place.

But hours later, the Americans went one better with Michael Weiss and Damo Allen completing a one-two finish for the States in the men's figure skating at Sabnango.

The pair ousted China's Zhang Min, who had been leading after Sunday night's short programme but who had to settle for bronze.

The Japanese ski jumpers, who allowed Slovenia's Franci Petek to take the silver, showed the skills which have seen their ordic combined athletes take charge of the World Cup in recent years.

With a points total of 240, Fukita, who won the large hill event at the Zakopane Games two years ago, was comfortably clear of Petek (235.5), with Vesugi polling 226.5.

Weiss, who had been lying third behind Allen and Zhang after the short programme, gave a highly polished performance after both of his rivals had bungled landings in the free section.

"It was good and clean and I got things done that I had to do," said Weiss.

"I knew I was one of the best skaters here and I feel that I can compete with the best in the world. I hope I can go on to do as well if not better."

Allen, who also won the silver medal two years ago at

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five minutes of the third quarter with a 23-5 run, and Burrell's 3-pointer with 16.4 seconds left gave Charlotte a 78-69 lead. The Hornets hit 10 of 16 shots in the period and outscored the Bulls 15-3.

Heat 103, Cavaliers 96: At Cleveland, Glen Rice, the NBA's 3-point shooting champion, hit six 3-pointers and scored 36 points as Miami snapped a three-game losing streak.

Alvin Gentry earned his second NBA coaching victory since replacing Kevin Loughery on Feb. 15. Cleveland had a three-game winning streak halted.

Rice, who won the 3-point shooting championship during the NBA's all-star weekend, was 6-for-16 on 3-pointers and Miami was 9-for-15.

The Cavaliers did not

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ALKHAN-YURT, Russia (Agencies) — Russian forces Tuesday made their biggest advance in three weeks in breakaway Chechenya, seizing control of the last road leading into the capital Grozny.